

PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Competition

Project Title: Integrating Finance and Law for Responsible
Business Leadership

Award Winners: Dr Isik Akin & Dr Eda Sahin, Bath Spa University

Project Summary

This project partners with SMEs to create real-world case studies that explore the intersection of financial decision-making, legal frameworks, and ethical leadership. By connecting academic concepts with practical business challenges, it equips students with the skills needed to lead responsibly in a rapidly changing world. The initiative not only teaches key business principles but also aims to shape future leaders who can drive positive change and build businesses that thrive ethically and sustainably. This is essential as businesses today navigate the delicate balance between finance, compliance, and ethical responsibility.

Background & Context

The project was inspired by the growing need for businesses to navigate the complex relationship between financial performance, legal compliance, and ethical responsibility. As industries face increasingly intricate challenges, there is a need to prepare future business leaders with the skills to make decisions that are not only financially sound but also ethically grounded and legally compliant. The inspiration came from our recognition that academic theory alone cannot fully equip students for these real-world challenges. By collaborating with SMEs, we aim to bridge this gap and provide students with tangible, practical examples.

The primary teaching challenge we are addressing is the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Traditional teaching often focuses on isolated topics like finance, law, and ethics, without exploring how these disciplines intersect in real-world decision-making. This project aims to create a more integrated approach, where students engage with complex, real-world dilemmas that require them to consider finance, legal frameworks, and ethical considerations simultaneously. Additionally, we want to address the challenge of ensuring that responsible management practices are embedded throughout the curriculum, not treated as isolated topics.

This project directly aligns with several PRME principles, particularly the first three principles that focus on responsible management education, incorporating sustainability into curricula, and fostering social responsibility. By creating case studies that emphasize the balance between finance, law, and ethics, we are ensuring that students develop the skills to make responsible and sustainable business decisions. Additionally, the project aligns with the SDGs, specifically:

- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth through ethical business practices.
- SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by encouraging sustainable business practices.
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by promoting collaboration between academia, SMEs, and the wider community to create a shared learning platform.

Project Description

We conducted a workshop on the 4th of June at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute. The primary goal of the session was to collect real-life problems faced by SMEs, particularly in the areas of finance, law, and ethics. During the workshop, we also explained the importance of real-life case studies in higher education business teaching and discussed what makes a good case study for responsible management education. Participants from local SMEs shared their challenges, providing valuable insights that will be used to develop authentic and impactful teaching resources.

The workshop was attended by 7 participants from 5 different SMEs across various industries in Bristol. The industries represented included wholesale food distribution, construction & demolition, foodservice supply chain, breakfast cafes, and digital & handcrafted products. Two SMEs had two representatives each, while three SMEs had one representative each. Participants from the same SMEs collaborated to complete the SME Case Study Contribution Form together. In total, 5 SMEs contributed valuable insights, creating real-life case studies. The session was led by Dr Isik Akin and Dr Eda Sahin from Bath Spa University. This collaboration between academia and industry fostered a productive exchange of ideas, contributing to the development of practical and relevant teaching resources.

Our approach is distinctive because it actively involves SMEs in the creation of case studies that reflect their real-world challenges, offering students authentic, practical examples rather than theoretical scenarios. The interactive workshop allowed participants to directly share their experiences, fostering a collaborative environment that enriched the learning process. By integrating finance, law, and ethics within the same case studies, we addressed the complexities of decision-making in responsible business leadership, a key area often overlooked in traditional teaching. Additionally, our focus on SMEs as contributors sets this project apart, as we tapped into local, diverse business insights across multiple industries, ensuring that the case studies were relevant, dynamic, and up-to-date. The co-creation process strengthened the connection between academia and industry, producing resources that are rooted in the real-world realities of business operations.

Project Progress

The project is progressing well, with the workshop held on the 4th of June marking a key milestone. During the session, 5 different SMEs shared their real-life challenges in finance, law, and ethics. These insights are being used to develop authentic case studies for business and law education, aligning with PRME's commitment to responsible management education. The collaborative nature of the workshop ensured that the case studies were grounded in real-world business practices, enhancing their relevance for students.

The team has outlined the themes for the case studies, and the initial design and development phase is underway. The case studies are being formatted and refined to meet academic standards.

The next steps involve finalising the design, formatting, and testing of the case studies, based on feedback from pilot testing. The project team will engage 5 students and 5 educators to test these case studies and provide valuable feedback. Adjustments will be made based on this input to ensure the case studies are both academically rigorous and practically relevant. In this semester, the case studies will be applied, and the results will be presented at the PRME UK & Ireland Chapter conference.

We look forward to sharing the final outcomes from this innovative project with you later in 2025.

For more information about the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Innovative Pedagogy Seed Funding Competition, please click [here](#).