



Aston Business School
Birmingham

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

**Student Support Coordinator
(Undergraduate Programmes)**

Aston Business School

Reference Number: R110155

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ASTON UNIVERSITY

(www.aston.ac.uk)

Founded in 1895, Aston is a long-established research-led University known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to industry, government and commerce.

Aston University is based in the centre of Birmingham, one of Europe's liveliest and most welcoming cities, and home to 50,000+ students. Aston University's friendly and safe 40-acre campus houses all the University's academic, social and accommodation facilities, creating a uniquely tight-knit learning environment and underlining the benefit of being one of the smaller higher-ranking universities. Work recently began on a £215m Aston Student Village development project to further enhance the campus; Phase One of the development (circa 1,300 en-suite rooms) is due to be ready for students in September 2010, and the enhanced Library, with more capacity and better facilities, is due for October 2010.

Aston University gained its charter in 1966, and has come a long way in broadening its educational excellence and student appeal across Schools in Business, Engineering and Applied Science, Life and Health Sciences, and Languages and Social Sciences. Professor Julia King became Vice-Chancellor of the University in 2006, and presided in 2007 over the definition and implementation of the [Aston 2012 Strategy](#) which has helped define Aston's positioning, and the advantages which will help sustain its further development and 'edge' in an increasingly international competitive context.

The Aston 2012 Strategy aimed at establishing Aston as a top 10 University whilst retaining the core value: delivering accessible excellence. This has been underpinned by the challenging mission to deliver excellence in the learning experience, in rigorous and relevant research, and in community engagement, specifically addressing local interests and business, with the support of a high-quality physical, communications and information infrastructure. It also highlighted core values which make Aston an outstanding place to work; these include, amongst others, valuing diversity, creating inspirational learning opportunities and research outcomes, developing 'critical reflective learners' who will make a real difference, focusing on student welfare and wellbeing, stimulating adventure and innovation, celebrating successes, and promoting integrity and sustainable growth.

Two important interlinking initiatives aim at building further on the Aston 2012 Strategy: firstly the Aston 2020 Strategy, which is at an early stage of discussion and development; secondly the Aston First transformation programme, which seeks to establish what Aston stands for, and ensure Aston fulfils its potential through branding, external projection, culture and communications.

Aston University justifiably prides itself in the diversity of its population of 9,000+ students, of whom 7,300+ are undergraduates, about 1,500 are taught postgraduate students, and 200+ are postgraduate research students. Over 20% of students come from outside the European Union, while over 15% of undergraduates are from outside the UK. Aston is ranked 13th of 113 UK universities by the 2010 Complete University Guide, and 19th in the Guardian rankings 2010, confirming its place amongst the elite of UK Universities.

As well as offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, Aston works with the public and private sector to develop tailored Continuing Professional Development and

Foundation Degree programmes. Aston's reputation for helping graduates secure good jobs stands out, with 82% finding graduate-level employment within six months of graduation, compared to a national average of less than 70% (relating to 2007 and 2008 graduates). This success placed Aston 9th out of all 120 UK Universities for this variable in the 2008-9 Sunday Times University Guide. Improvements in the entry grades needed and in University applications also bear witness to the growth in Aston's reputation in recent years.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Aston's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Julia King, is the principal academic and executive officer of the University, with overall responsibility for Aston's executive management and day-to-day direction. The Vice-Chancellor is supported by four Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Professor Helen Higson (the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor), Dr Phil Extance, Professor Alison Halstead, and Professor Martin Griffin.

The Chief Financial Officer, Alastair Hewgill, the Director of Staff and Student Services, Adèle MacKinlay, who is also the University Secretary and Registrar, and the Director of Marketing Strategy and Communications, David Farrow, head all the support functions which provide administrative services to the University. Sheila O'Neal is the Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

Schools of Study

As indicated above, Aston's academic activity is divided into four Schools of Study, each of which is Managed by an Executive Dean as follows:

Executive Dean, Aston Business School:	Professor John Edwards (Acting)
Executive Dean, Engineering and Applied Science:	Professor Robert Berry
Executive Dean, Life and Health Sciences:	Professor Helen Griffiths
Executive Dean, Languages and Social Sciences:	Professor Pam Moores

Honorary positions and governance

Aston is governed by the University Council, which comprises 10 staff members from within the executive and Schools leadership, 2 student members, and 14 appointed lay members who are business and community leaders from the Midlands and beyond – 20% are Aston alumni. The University Senate is Aston's supreme academic authority. Aston's Chancellor, Sir Michael Bett, is the honorary and ceremonial head of the University. See Annexe 2 for the full Committee Structure.

Financial Performance

Total income for the last full year 2010 was £110.5m, representing a 5% increase over the previous year, with 33% of income from the Funding Council, teaching fees and support grants accounting for 43%, research grants accounting for 8%, and other operating income of 16% arising from residential and rental revenues and intellectual property rights

“An inspirational learning community”

Our Vision

To be a world class research-based business school and the best in Europe for employability and global mobility

To be the most inspiring and innovative business school in Europe

Our Balanced Mission

Our balanced mission has three equally important and integrated elements. These are learning and teaching, research and community engagement. Our mission is therefore as follows:

Learning and teaching: To provide inspirational and life-long learning for all our students and alumni so that they in turn offer effective and responsible leadership in their various organisations, communities and nations.

Research: To undertake rigorous research that answers the major questions facing business leaders, policy makers and practitioners nationally and internationally with a particular focus on:

- Performance measurement and management
- Leadership, ethics, governance and sustainability
- Innovation, knowledge and diversity
- Strategy, practice and organisation

Community engagement: To contribute through knowledge transfer, innovation and inspiration to the development and regeneration of our region and to the development of organisations and communities locally and globally.

Within Aston Business School: In order to fulfill our mission, we are committed to building and sustaining a work community of excellent students and staff working in a supportive and motivating team-based environment that is a model of the organisational cultures we advocate.

Our Culture and Values

The following describe the core values of Aston Business School, based on consultation with our staff and consistent with the values of the wider university:

People	We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere with approachable and supportive staff.
Performance	We endeavour to make an impact both locally and globally through our relevant research and teaching.
Innovation	We seek to be the most innovative, exciting and responsive business school in the UK.
Quality	We are consistent in our dedication to excellence in all areas.
Processes	We endeavour to be an ethical, forward-thinking and socially responsible school with a commitment to equality and diversity.

The core cultural characteristics of Aston Business School that differentiate it from the thousands of other Schools are described below.

Employability with Career Development

Aston Business School has one of the best records internationally for the employment records of its undergraduates and is one of the most effective in Europe for providing springboards for postgraduates' careers. In 2010 the Financial Times Global MBA ranked our MBA programme as the best in the UK and fifth in Europe for career progression – assessed by status in an organisation over the three years from graduation. Our model placement programme for undergraduates is a key element in ensuring our students are highly attractive to potential employers nationally and internationally and this provides a springboard for rapid career development.

Inspiration with Innovation

Students have repeated contact with outstanding lecturers who provide challenging but well supported learning experiences. They are also inspired to take on leadership roles in their society and to achieve their potential as ethical, effective leaders in their organisations and their communities.

Global Mobility with Diversity

Aston Business School is a centre of excellence for intercultural training, ensuring our students are well equipped to work internationally and across cultural boundaries. Aston University is located in the centre of a highly diverse ethnic and cultural population and Aston Business School's student population comprises more than 30% from countries outside the UK (over 80% at postgraduate level). Our students therefore have a unique opportunity to learn how to work in diverse cultural groups to ensure high levels of productivity and innovation than is possible in more homogeneous settings. This prepares our students for international careers, careers in multinational organisations and for effectiveness in our increasingly diverse communities.

Relevance with Excellence

Our teaching programmes are of high quality (as evidenced by professional accreditations and independent assessments) while at the same time focused on the needs of business and

organisations more generally, guaranteeing the employability of our students. Aston Business School must remain in the top 10 business schools across Europe for employability.

Rigour with Applicability

Our research is internationally recognised and in many areas internationally excellent. We are increasingly focused on world class research, while remaining relevant to the needs of organisations and society. Research findings are translated into benefits for business, industry and the public sector.

Warmth with Respect

Key features of Aston University and Aston Business School are the informality and genuine friendliness of staff and students, while embracing individual, religious and cultural diversity.

Transformational with Social Responsibility

We welcome students from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and offer them a life transforming experience. At the same time we ensure that their sense of social responsibility, commitment to contributing in their communities, safeguarding of the environment and appreciation of the ethics of business and leadership is embedded in this transformation.

World Leading Research

Aston Business School is a research led business school with 98% of our research activity judged to be either 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent' in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The Business School continues to attract high-profile academics to conduct innovative research projects.

All academics are encouraged to participate in the work of research programmes and centres and to engage in intellectual activities through other means. Consequently, research has the highest priority in planning and resource allocation and the impact of this is illustrated by the research productivity of the School. Since 2001 staff in the School have published nearly 3,000 academic works, including 125 books, 260 contributions to edited works, 1,500 papers in referenced academic journals, 900 referenced conference papers and 110 working papers.

Not only does the academic faculty produce outputs that are internationally excellent in terms of quality, but much of the work is also carried out on international issues, in collaboration with international partners, and disseminated to an international audience.

Approach to Learning and Teaching

Aston Business School's reputation for excellence in learning and teaching makes it a preferred choice for undergraduate, postgraduate, executive education and research students across the globe. All academic programmes of study are informed by research with a strong professional dimension as evidenced through accreditations and professional endorsements. Creativity and innovation in curriculum design and delivery support the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and which is responsive to the changing needs of the external world and workplace. There is clear integration of theory/reflection and practice in our programmes with emphasis on workplace education and experience to ensure relevance to the careers and aspirations of the graduates.

Corporate Activities

Aston Business School's strategic focus on relevance and rigour has led to the School's excellent reputation in the business world and has attracted highly regarded corporate connections. These connections are reflected in their impact on the employability and global mobility of Aston Business School's graduates. The Financial Times, The Times, The Sunday Times and Guardian newspapers all rank Aston as the top UK institution for employability. The 2008 student destination survey revealed that over 77% of undergraduates were in graduate-level employment within 6 months of graduation (DLHE) while 65% of postgraduates had found permanent employment within three months of graduation (Financial Times Masters in Management 2009).

This strong corporate position can be attributed to:

- The University and Business School mission focusing on Community Engagement and setting clear objectives for this engagement with policy-making and public sector bodies, companies and professional firms locally and globally.
- Active participation of the Aston Business School Advisory Board (including international members).
- Positive encouragement for staff to engage with the organisations and communities at a regional, national and international level, e.g. by carrying out research and consultancy with commercial and non-profit organisations, and to be active in forming links with the business community.
- Curriculum design and content that reflects consultancy and corporate links of staff and which is based on their international and national research programmes. These research programmes focus on producing relevant research and support for business.
- A number of businesses are directly engaged in the teaching activities of the Business School (e.g. in relation to the Business Game, Unilever, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, First Water have all contributed).
- Placement work experience of one year which forms a compulsory part of the degree programme for the majority of Aston Business School's undergraduate students, many students spending this time abroad or with international companies.
- Executive and full time MBA programmes that draw on the work experience of students.
- Part-time MBA and MSc programmes and now Foundation Degrees, on which students study whilst they work, and carry out project work in their own organisations.
- Strong links with Birmingham Science Park Aston, particularly via the Business Partnership Unit (BPU).

- Accreditation of most degree programmes by professional bodies, drawing on the links of academic staff with these organisations.
- Executive education courses that bring many corporate clients physically into the Business School's building.

Global Mobility

The number of international students has continued to grow on all degrees. As stated earlier, Aston Business School's student population comprises more than 30% from countries outside the UK (over 80% at postgraduate level).

This dynamic range of participants enables the Postgraduate Programme to encourage students to explore a range of cultural and multicultural issues within their courses, which involve a large amount of work in groups of mixed nationalities. The programme also organises study visits for groups of students to partner institutions such as ESC Toulouse, ESC Rouen and Audencia Nantes, France, SDA Bocconi Milan, Italy and Copenhagen Business School, Denmark.

International student numbers have always been buoyant on the Doctoral Programme. Non UK students currently constitute 53% of students enrolled for the PhD and DBA. The proportion is expected to be maintained as the programme grows further.

The School has also continued to strengthen its links with international partners, and is focusing on deeper relationships with a few high quality institutions. The School now has 53 partners in the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Korea, Spain, Thailand, Taiwan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, China (Hong Kong SAR), New Zealand and the United States. As well as facilitating student exchanges, the School's flexible style of agreement has enabled these partnerships to include many other activities, such as staff exchanges, research links, sharing of materials, development of joint programmes, group study visits, and arranging work placements etc.

Aston Business School has seen a large increase in the number of international staff applications and appointments made. 40% of academic faculty are from outside the UK. The School's international faculty are supplemented by the visiting scholar programme which provides funding to bring leading international researchers to Aston to work alongside colleagues in the research groups.

Undergraduate Programme

Over the last five years the demand for Aston Business School's undergraduate degrees has recorded one of the highest growth rates of the UK. The accessibility of the campus and the outstanding employment record of its graduates have fuelled this demand. Our students are exceptionally strong academically and a delight to teach. The majority of undergraduate students take part in a one year work placement that enables them to gain valuable work experience. The programme has also been successful in the implementation of a widening participation strategy.

MSc Postgraduate Programme

The success of Aston Business School is evident in the increasing diversity of MSc programmes offered and the steady rise in home and overseas students. Aston's Masters in Management programmes have been ranked 1st in the world for 'careers' The Financial Times (2009).

Aston Business School is continually developing innovative ways for new graduates to study MSc degrees. This is epitomised by the European Masters in Management, a 22 month programme which is jointly delivered by Aston, EM-Lyon in France and Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich, Germany. Students graduate with a triple degree - one from each of the institutions.

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The Aston MBA programme has been consistently recognised as one of the leading MBA programmes in the UK and is highly placed in key rankings. With more than 26 nationalities represented this year, the MBA programme has a truly international mix essential for those aiming to be global managers. Aston offers excellent flexible learning options for MBA students, providing the opportunity to study full-time, part-time, by DVD distance learning or a tailored combination of delivery.

Centre for Executive Development

The Centre for Executive Development is the executive training and consultancy arm of Aston Business School, building on Aston's world class research and expert knowledge to deliver tailored and bespoke solutions to partner organisations. Aston Business School programmes are designed around the challenges and business critical areas that an organisation might face. Programmes are structured to meet both individual and organisational requirements. The model is based on relationship building, needs analysis and assessment, programme development, programme delivery and follow up and closure.

Aston Business School Life

At Aston Business School we recognise that our personnel are our biggest asset, without them the Business School simply wouldn't function and be the success it is today. That's why the right people and the right culture are crucial. We are proud of our culture, which manifests itself in a friendly and supportive working environment and commitment to high professional standards.

Aston Business School has several procedures to support professional and career development. We encourage every employee to have regular development discussions with their line manager and agree their individual objectives. Personal appraisals, peer review and mentoring are used positively to help staff in planning and achieving their professional and career objectives. We also operate a procedure for assessing the contributions that each colleague makes to Aston Business School, in terms of research teaching and administration; the ABS Load Model.

Academics are allowed freedom to pursue their scholarly work. This includes providing opportunities, resources and encouragement for professional career development. Indeed, a key role of the Deputy Dean is helping and facilitating academics in their careers. Promotion is based on individual performance against clearly defined criteria, and there are no quota restrictions on promotions.

Committed to helping our people grow, we've created a culture in which everyone can develop their knowledge and skills through a wide range of initiatives. Once you join our team we will support you all the way, from offering in-house training to sponsoring professional and vocational

qualifications. Whether you would benefit from basic PC skills, specialised instruction or senior management training, we will encourage you to develop on both a personal and professional level.

Rewarding staff for their performance and achievements is another central feature of our culture. Aston Business School has a generous PRP scheme, which rewards performance against clearly defined criteria

Aston Business School Management Structure

The Executive Dean of Aston Business School, is aided in the management of the School by a team which consists of the Deputy Dean and Associate Deans in charge of the teaching programmes, research and administration of the School. Academic Group Heads are responsible for all academic appointments, while the Director of Planning and Resources or Programme Directors are responsible for non-academic appointments.

The aim is for Aston Business School's undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes' administrative teams to remove the major administrative burden from professors and other academics so that they may concentrate on teaching and research. The teams take wide responsibility for the administration of the degrees and are also the first point of contact for students with academic or other concerns.

Current staffing numbers are 111 academics, 19 research and 99 support staff.

Commitment to Quality through Accreditation

The Business School has accreditations for its courses from all the leading professional bodies and Aston is among just 1% of business schools worldwide, and one of only 11 in the UK, to hold triple accreditation from AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS.

Aston was also the first full range business school in the UK to receive EQUIS accreditation. This is awarded by The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). The EFMD describe the 'fundamental objective' of EQUIS as 'to raise the standard of management education worldwide. EQUIS facilitates standard setting, benchmarking, mutual learning, and the dissemination across borders of good practice.'

Accreditations from all of these prestigious organisations are only given out for a limited period of time and schools must submit to reaccreditation after a given period. The accreditation or reaccreditation process consists of a major inspection of all the school's activities from curriculum development to management of programmes; panels of staff, students and alumni are all interviewed to get their opinions. No school can afford to rest on its laurels after being granted accreditation from one or more of these bodies as if standards are left to slide AMBA, EQUIS and the AACSB can and will remove their award

The fact that Aston continues to hold these awards is your reassurance that we continue to strive to achieve excellence in all that we do.

Heart of Birmingham

Aston Business School is located in the Centre of a highly diverse ethnic and cultural population with excellent rail, road and international airport connections. The social and cultural opportunities are excellent with a range of restaurants, theatres, art galleries, museums and a world class shopping centre. The city is developing and improving with major regeneration projects in which Aston Business School is playing a vital role.