

JOINT CONFERENCE

Empowering Leaders for
Global Contemporary Businesses

27-29 October 2025



Hosted by:

Centre for Leadership and Empowerment, University of Greater Manchester

Global and Sustainable Business Futures, University of Bradford

SHE Inspires Foundation

Conference Chairs: Professor Christian Harrison

Dr Nuttawuth (Wuth) Muenjohn

Gulnaz Brennan

Conference Organising Committee: Dr Nirma Jayawardena

Dr Widya Nandini

Tobias Whittington

Romana Hashmi

About us

The Centre for Leadership and Empowerment at the University of Greater Manchester, in collaboration with the Global and Sustainable Business Futures Research Cluster at the University of Bradford and the SHE Inspires Foundation, proudly invites submissions for the Joint Conference on Empowering Leaders in Global Contemporary Businesses.

This pioneering event brings together scholars, practitioners, industry leaders, and changemakers to explore leadership strategies and approaches, sustainable business practices, and strategic innovation within contemporary global enterprises. Positioned at the intersection of academic research and real-world impact, the conference aims to spark meaningful dialogue and inspire actionable insights towards a more empowered, equitable, and future-oriented business landscape.

We are a diverse community of academics and practitioners with expertise across a wide range of fields, including leadership, human resource management, organisation studies, organisational behaviour, culture, psychology, philosophy, gender studies, sustainability, resilience, management education, anthropology, and mainstream management studies. Drawing on our extensive research and evidence-based practice, we are committed to supporting individuals, teams, and organisations as they develop the capabilities needed to thrive in today's dynamic and turbulent environment.

Call for Papers

The significance of leadership in global business contexts cannot be overstated (Rego et al., 2012). In particular, the capabilities of entrepreneurial leaders in fostering innovation and recognising opportunities are vital, especially in environments characterised by high levels of complexity, turbulence, and uncertainty. Such leaders not only generate innovative solutions to address pressing business challenges but also shape and steer the broader organisational processes of innovation and opportunity recognition (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020). Furthermore, empowering forms of leadership are instrumental in cultivating the dynamic capabilities required for organisations to effectively navigate and adapt to volatile and unpredictable conditions (Bagheri & Harrison, 2020).

Concurrently, leadership functions as a critical developmental mechanism for cultivating resilient and agile human capital—an essential prerequisite for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Almutawa et al., 2016; Banmairuroy et al., 2022). In addition, there is growing recognition of the importance of strategic managerial approaches in fostering innovation across organisational contexts (Muenjohn et al., 2021).

Leadership plays a pivotal role in driving strategic change, particularly in promoting digital governance and realising sustainable outcomes (Galpin & Lee Whittington, 2012; Peng, 2022). Identifying and implementing the most effective leadership approaches is therefore critical for enhancing strategic performance within contemporary global business environments—especially in relation to the advancement of green human resource management (HRM) practices and the development of sustainable business models (Winkler, 2010; Kurucz et al., 2017; Yan & Hu, 2022).

Although scholarly interest in leadership continues to expand, empirical progress—particularly within the context of contemporary global business environments—remains limited (Gupta et al., 2024). While leadership is frequently referenced in reviews concerning sustainable and modern business outcomes, it is often addressed only superficially or identified as an area necessitating further investigation (Sylvester, 2024). Despite the growing body of literature on leadership development, there remains a lack of clear consensus regarding the forms of leadership most effective for strategic planning and decision-making aligned with global and sustainability-focused objectives (Harrison, 2024; Peterlin et al., 2015).

Call for Papers

The study of leadership necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon insights from psychology, strategic decision-making, business innovation, gender studies, management, and education (Marx, 2015; Jia et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2019). Accordingly, there is a compelling need to advance scholarly inquiry in this field by bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation.

This joint conference aims to advance current understandings of empowering leadership within the context of contemporary global business. We welcome submissions that provide novel insights into leadership development and strategic managerial practices across diverse organisational settings—including the incorporation of creative management approaches and emerging digital technologies.

The conference is also intended for practitioners, business owners, managers, executives, and organisational leaders, offering them actionable insights into the critical skillsets required to succeed in today's rapidly evolving landscape. By examining the strategic role of leadership through the lens of technological advancement and digital transformation, the conference challenges conventional thinking while fostering enhanced performance, innovation, and sustainable outcomes.

Above all, it seeks to cultivate the mindsets and behaviours necessary to generate social, environmental, and economic value within organisations.

Who Should Attend?

This conference is open to:

- ▶ Academics and researchers in leadership, business, and related fields
- ▶ Business owners, entrepreneurs, executives, and organisational leaders
- ▶ HR professionals and leadership development consultants
- ▶ Policymakers and NGO representatives focused on sustainable and inclusive development

Call for Papers

We welcome contributions that offer novel insights, challenge conventional wisdom, or present evidence-based practice across a range of leadership and organisational contexts. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Emerging leadership models in global business settings
- ▶ Empowering leadership strategies and organisational capability
- ▶ Leadership in creativity, innovation, and learning
- ▶ Gender and inclusive leadership
- ▶ Leadership for sustainability and ESG outcomes
- ▶ Strategic governance and innovation in international organisations
- ▶ Digital leadership and technological transformation
- ▶ Responsible and ethical leadership practices
- ▶ International HRM and leadership development
- ▶ Cross-cultural leadership and global talent strategies
- ▶ Ethical Leadership in the Age of AI
- ▶ Sustainability Leadership - Green Capitalism or Greenwashing?
- ▶ Geopolitics and the Global Corporation
- ▶ Social entrepreneurship and business ethics
- ▶ The role of innovation and agility in sustaining competitive advantage
- ▶ Empowering digital innovation by diverse leadership in ICT
- ▶ International business and leadership lessons to tackle societal grand challenges.

Submission Guides

This conference is for academics and practitioners who are interested in developing the *leadership and managerial capacity* to succeed within a dynamic environment. Our purpose is to create a meaningful dialogue between academics and practitioners by creating space for debate in the following three formats. However, participation in the conference is also possible without a submission.

- 1. Research and Theory Tracks:** Submissions to this stream should make contributions towards research and/or theory. In this stream, we would like to particularly encourage early career researchers and PhD students to submit their work.
- 2. Practical Workshops:** Submissions to this stream should be practically orientated and should be small workshops that explore innovative and creative techniques and tools used in leadership learning, development and education. Space and resources will be provided for explorations, so requirements, such as room size and time, should be made clear in the abstract/summary submitted.
- 3. Case Studies:** This submission stream is dedicated to those wishing to describe and explore examples of innovative and creative leadership learning, development and education.

While we encourage submissions linked to the conference theme, we also welcome work on any theme linked to research on leadership and allied fields.

Submissions to the conference should be in the form of a 750-word (excluding references) abstract and should be forwarded to the conference organisers on or before the **13th of June 2025**

The conference committee will consider abstracts after the deadline, and decisions are communicated within two weeks.

Submission Guides

All submissions should include the following details on the cover page:

- ▶ Title
- ▶ Name of author(s)
- ▶ Organisation affiliation/position(s)
- ▶ Address
- ▶ Email address
- ▶ Topic area and Conference Tracks
- ▶ Word count (excluding references)

All submissions should consist of:

- ▶ an abstract of 750 words
- ▶ a Word or PDF file
- ▶ There will be provision for research posters and please let us know if you intend to present a poster rather than an abstract. We will also offer a research incubator workshop, where participants can present early research ideas and get feedback on the idea, suggestions for relevant related work and possible journals from senior faculty.

Key Conference Information

Conference Venue:

University of Greater Manchester

Conference Date: 27-29 October 2025

 Submission Deadline: 13 June 2025

 Submission Portal / Contact:

- ▶ Widya Nandini - w.nandini@bolton.ac.uk
- ▶ Romana Hashmi - r.hashmi2@bolton.ac.uk
- ▶ Tobias Whittington - t.whittington@bradford.ac.uk
- ▶ Nirma Jayawardena - n.jayawardena@bradford.ac.uk

Conference Registration Fee:

- ▶ Early bird rate (including conference dinner) until the 23rd of June 2025 – £200 per person
- ▶ Standard registration (including conference dinner) from the 24th of June, 2025 – £250 per person
- ▶ Student fee (subject to availability) – £180 per person
- ▶ Rate per day until Date, Month, 2025 – £150 per person
- ▶ Virtual Rate – £100 per person

Conference Contact:

Please refer all initial queries regarding the conference and your abstract submission to:

- ▶ Widya Nandini - w.nandini@bolton.ac.uk
- ▶ Romana Hashmi - r.hashmi2@bolton.ac.uk

Key Conference Information

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND PANELLISTS

Our joint conference brings together key notes and panel discussions of the top academics and practitioners in their field who would share their insights and discuss their work. See the conference website for more details.

Why Attend?

This is more than a conference — it's an **academic, professional, and personal growth experience** that will:

- ▶ Boost your publication journey
- ▶ Expand your network globally
- ▶ Expose you to cutting-edge ideas and practices
- ▶ Leave you inspired, refreshed, and connected

Conference Tracks

- ▶ New Leadership Approach in Global Contemporary Businesses
- ▶ Fostering Creativity and Innovation in Global Contemporary Businesses.
- ▶ Gender and Inclusive Leadership in Global Contemporary Business
- ▶ Digital Leadership and Strategic Governance
- ▶ Global Talent Strategies and Technological Transformation
- ▶ Global Sustainable Business Practices
- ▶ Geopolitics and the Global Corporation
- ▶ Social entrepreneurship and business ethics
- ▶ International business and leadership lessons to tackle societal grand challenges
- ▶ International and Sustainable Human Resource Management

Conference Programme

Conference Venue:

University of Greater Manchester

Highlights include:

Key note sessions from renowned industry experts on leadership and empowerment

Small-group clinics focused on academic writing, research design, and methodology

Expert insights into crafting impactful abstracts, introductions, and overall scholarly work

Personalised feedback on your paper or research proposal

Panel Discussions

Roundtable and fireside chats with industry experts and practitioners on empowering leaders for global contemporary business

Doctoral Mentorship Programme

Supporting the next generation of scholars through tailored guidance and development.

Publication Opportunities

Enhance your academic profile with pathways to publication in reputable outlets.

Papers presented at the conference have opportunities for:

Books published by **Emerald** and **Routledge**

Publication in **ABS 2* and 3*** rated journals

Interactive Workshop Sessions

Insights from Leaders and Practitioners: Learn from top business leaders and industry innovators.

Leadership Development Workshops: Learn from leadership coaches and experts

Meet the Editors: Engage directly with journal editors to understand the publication process

Paper Development Workshops: Refine your research paper with expert advice

Conference Programme

Conference Venue:

University of Greater Manchester

Gala Dinner & Networking Night

Celebrate impact, scholarship, connections, and collaboration in an elegant setting. An evening dedicated to building lasting relationships across academia and practice.

Awards Ceremony

Recognising excellence in research and presentation:

- ▶ Best Paper Award
- ▶ Best Presenter Award
- ▶ Best Participant Award

Winners will be honoured during the Gala Dinner.

Entertainment & Leisure Activities

Experience an exciting blend of relaxation and engagement:

- ▶ **Bolton Arena Visit:** Explore world-class sports and leisure facilities
- ▶ **Formula Race Simulation Experience:** Challenge yourself with a thrilling racing simulation!

Virtual Programme

Conference Venue:

Zoom/Teams Meeting

What will you get:

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Highlights include:

- ▶ Key note sessions from renowned industry experts on leadership and empowerment
- ▶ Personalised feedback on your paper or research proposal
- ▶ Small-group clinics focused on academic writing, research design, and methodology
- ▶ Expert insights into crafting impactful abstracts, introductions, and overall scholarly work

Panel Discussions

Roundtable and fireside chats with industry experts and practitioners on empowering leaders for global contemporary business

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Papers presented at the conference have opportunities for:

- ▶ Books published by **Emerald** and **Routledge**
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We make virtual feel *personal and powerful* with:

- ▶ **PDF & interactive online agenda**
- ▶ **Live polls, in-session quizzes, and real-time feedback** to keep you engaged
- ▶ **Access to all session recordings**
- ▶ Downloadable **conference summary booklet**
- ▶ On-demand materials from keynote speakers & workshops

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