Contemporary organizations face significant challenges including, government debt and faltering economic growth, environmental degradation and climate change, poverty and social inequality, geopolitical instability, extended life expectancy and health, social media and the digital economy and the proliferation of big data. These problems tend to be intractable and elusive because they are influenced by many dynamic, complex and interconnected social, political, economic and technological factors. For many people, the failure to provide convincing responses to these challenges has exacerbated their sense of powerlessness, which in turn threatens to undermine politics, the authority of government and the legitimacy of our institutions.

Consistent with these challenges, much discussion is taking place in management and organisation studies regarding how best to cope with and respond to these large, unresolved societal problems and thrive the turbulent times we live in. Just as the old certainties and big assumptions about the world order that have governed our thinking no longer seem valid, it has become clear that many of our old models and theories were formed to deal with a very different set of circumstances and are therefore of questionable relevance to the contemporary work environment. We need new ideas, models and epistemologies consistent with connective, unpredictable, distributed, dynamic contexts. Such work needs to be undertaken from multiple perspectives and practices of different research disciplines.

Newcastle University is the ideal host for a debate on the role that academic research could play, not just in making sense of the above challenges, but also in terms of informing future practice. The Business School is a key part of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, one of three institutes established to address Newcastle’s chosen societal challenges – ageing, sustainability and social renewal. The Institute seeks to bring together research with a social purpose to make a difference by asking how individuals and communities can thrive in times of rapid transformational change.

BAM 2016 can harness the knowledge and expertise of the broad academic community in debating these issues, aspiring to make a difference to organisations and stakeholders across the UK and beyond.

**Doctoral Symposium will take place at the Newcastle University on Monday 5th September.**