

Professor Siv Vangen, Associate Dean, Research and Scholarship

Research is important to The Open University Business School because original research; the development of knowledge; the development of theory; is important to any higher education school with university status. It is essential to the development of the curriculum that our students will be studying with us.

One of the distinguishing features of research at The Open University Business School is that we have a strong commitment to the social mission of the University; so we have a consistent and persistent emphasis on issues of social importance and responsible management.

The research focus at The Open University Business School is both practice-oriented and academic research. It is academic in the sense that we conduct standard research that makes the contribution to the discipline more widely. We engage with the academic community in the UK and internationally, and that contribution is important to the development of the discipline as a whole and from which business school students will benefit; whether they are studying at The Open University Business School or elsewhere.

So in terms of our academic research we make a strong contribution internationally in areas such as public leadership, inter-organisational collaboration, leadership development, management learning and public administration among a number of other areas as well.

Much of the research at The Open University Business School is also practice-oriented, which means we are working or we're doing research with individuals who are close to practice: be it managers or leaders of organisations. And that practise-based focus of our research perhaps what distinguishes our business school. We know that this focus on practice is important to employers and that is why 86% of the FTSE 100 sponsor Open University students.

Any higher education school with university status obviously has to be concerned with original research, the development of new knowledge and the development of theory that feeds into its curriculum, and The Open University Business School is certainly not an exception in this case.

Like any business school in the UK we are assessed for the quality of our research through the Research Excellence Framework and in the last assessment in 2014, when business schools were also ranked according to the impact that they have on the economy, social impact, impact on policies and so on, The Open University Business School ranked 16th out of 101, which is a great achievement for us. We ranked 34th out of 101 business schools for the quality of our output, and that was a fine achievement for us, but we are constantly working on our research environment and to improve the quality and impact that our research is having.