

PhD Studentships 2025/26

Centre name:

Global Studies Centre (GSC)

Title of proposed research topic:

International Marketing Strategy and Performance

International markets are becoming increasingly important for businesses, offering greater market size and expanded opportunities. However, foreign markets also present significant challenges, such as cultural and institutional distance, the liability of foreignness, decoupling, and rising nationalism, all of which contribute to heightened uncertainty. To succeed, international firms must develop key capabilities and strategies, such as innovation, pricing, and distribution channels, to gain a competitive advantage and achieve superior performance. Leveraging digital technology can also play a critical role in helping firms navigate these complexities and enhance their global success.

Supervisors:

[Prof Xinming He](#)

[Prof Jorge Lengler](#)

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Title of proposed research topic:

Digital Globalisation

Information and communication technologies have significantly transformed the business environment and processes. Digital technologies present both challenges and opportunities for businesses, particularly in their global value chains. Traditional international business (IB) practices and theories, developed prior to the digital era, now require adaptation to address the shifts brought about by digitalisation. Key questions that arise include how digitalisation influences firms' decisions, behaviours, and outcomes in internationalisation - affecting areas such as sourcing, production, market selection, entry mode, international ventures, learning, and marketing, among others.

Supervisors:

[Prof Xinming He](#)

[Prof Jorge Lengler](#)

[Prof Rudolf Sinkovics](#)

[Prof Joseph Amankwah-Amoah](#); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0383-5831>

[Associate Prof Edward Gillmore](#)

References:

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Title of proposed research topic:

Emerging markets, MNEs, and FDI

International business scholars have become really focused on understanding the nature of emerging market (E) MNEs. In what ways, for example, are they different (if at all?) to developed market MNEs? This question has led to extensive theorising regarding EMNEs, as well as lots of empirical papers. Our researchers have significantly contributed to the EMNE debate, publishing on a wide variety of topics in leading international business and management journals. We go out of our way to ask new and critical questions and explore these questions using original and novel methodologies. For example, we have explored; the role of greenfield FDI establishment mode and sub-national location choices as a means to undertake firm-level catch-up strategies; undertaken large-scale EMNE/DMNE comparative analysis of strategic asset seeking deal outcomes using novel DID (time variant approaches); critically questioned the use of FDI data as it is applied to EMNEs (how do we track EMNE FDI when so much is channelled via ‘phantom’ companies in offshore tax havens and financial centres?); explored comparative outcomes of intangible asset growth for EMNEs undertaking different types of asset seeking FDI. These are a few of the areas we have researched. There are still so many more interesting questions and fruitful opportunities to answer these – so we welcome future researchers to contact us to discuss their ideas with a view to undertaking further studies. We welcome both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Supervisors:

[Prof Dylan Sutherland](#)

[Prof Roberta Aguzzoli](#)

[Prof Xinming He](#)

[Prof Joseph Amankwah-Amoah](#); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0383-5831>)

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Title of proposed research topic:

Responsible business

The Responsible Business research area aims to address pressing societal and environmental challenges, primarily through the analytic lens of global value chains and anchored in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We explore how businesses can innovate and collaborate across borders to align profitability with social and ecological responsibility. By examining the interactions among multinational enterprises (MNEs), small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and diverse stakeholders, our research aims to uncover pathways that enable sustainable value creation, resilience to global disruptions, and a reimagined approach to business strategy that integrates economic activities with broader societal well-being.

Supervisor:

[Prof Rudolf Sinkovics](#)

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Title of proposed research topic:

Expatriation and Migration

International migration has occurred for centuries. The UN estimates that 281 million people are migrants. However, the literature differentiates between migrants and expatriates, particularly based on their nationality. We explore the contexts of migrant workers and the motives for migration, focusing specifically on assigned expatriates and self-initiated expatriates. By addressing this underexplored area, we aim to contribute to governments, companies, and migrants, particularly by helping to develop practices that better integrate migrants into the economic labour market.

Supervisor:

[Prof Roberta Aguzzoli](#)

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Title of proposed research topic:

MNE Structure and Strategy

A core area of focus in international business is global strategy, our researchers focus on MNEs adoption of strategies that balance global integration with local responsiveness to manage their international operations effectively. We focus on understanding how MNEs implement global strategies to achieve efficiency and standardization while adapting to local markets through decentralized structures that allow flexibility. Key questions that we explore are how MNEs use transnational strategy, combine global coordination with local adaptation, and how matrix structures are adapted to manage complex operations across geographic lines. Central to this is how MNEs strike a balance between control and responsiveness when mandating subsidiaries across the MNE network to enhance innovation and maintain competitiveness internationally.

Supervisor:

[Associate Prof Edward Gillmore](#)

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