

THE HENLEY MA BOARD PRACTICE AND DIRECTORSHIP



Henley
Business School

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

The Henley MA Board Practice and Directorship

The role of board director is becoming progressively demanding and diverse. This includes monitoring strategic oversight, scanning emerging potential risks, wider stakeholder and resource building, steering the vision through identifying opportunities for business growth or development. A director's skills and qualities in handling dilemmas and inconsistencies, while remaining authentic, are important when being pulled in all directions.

More than ever, boards are dealing with high levels of uncertainty and are required to adapt to fast-changing markets and societal impacts; the pandemic, geopolitics, political dilemmas, industry competitiveness, information security, technological advancement, ESG and achieving net zero are just some of the challenges boards and their organisations are facing.

At times, board dynamics can be seen as a place of tension, conflict, contradiction and being out of touch. Henley Business School's international research shows over 85% of board directors are not clear on their organisation's competitive advantage, and internally boards are often disconnected from their management. For long-term sustainable advantage, senior leaders need to be aligned and engaged.

Designed for experienced directors and senior leaders from across the private, public and third sectors, the Henley MA Board Practice and Directorship (MA BPD) addresses the current demands on boards and directorship, equipping you with superior skills for board level engagement and stewardship practices.

As accountability becomes more prevalent the need for professionalisation of directors is important for board effectiveness, contribution and governance. This programme will help you to confidently handle existing and future board level challenges and enhance your director qualities, value, and contribution, towards enabling long-term organisational sustainability.

The MA Board Practice and Directorship is offered in partnership with a number of organisations, delivered in the UK and other European locations.

The programme and qualifications

The programme is offered as three stages, each awarded with a recognised qualification:

- **Postgraduate Certificate (Stage 1)**
- **Postgraduate Diploma (Stages 1 and 2)**
- **Henley MA Board Practice and Directorship (Stages 1, 2 and 3)**

Initially Stage 1 of the MA BPD is being launched by Henley in collaboration with partner organisations. Henley Business School may launch subsequent Stages (2 and 3) following a student's successful completion of the PG Cert BDP. However the running of future stages cannot be guaranteed and is subject to minimum student numbers being reached.

Summary

Focusing on governance and strategic oversight, the programme will equip you with the personal skills to direct change in the boardroom. By broadening your understanding of effective board performance and exploring board dynamics and resilience, you will be able to effectively fulfil your responsibilities. You will also learn how to work with and influence others at board level as well as the importance of the interrogation of evidence in decision-making.

Each board and its organisational context is unique. As a result, the programme considers what it takes to deliver highly effective boards, director behaviours and governance frameworks across different sectors and settings.

The programme is delivered by expert academic faculty, with insights from highly experienced board practitioners. It also draws extensively on the top-team governance research conducted at Henley Business School, which covers more than 19,000 boards across 37 countries.

Who is it for?

Senior leaders with directorship potential and experienced practising board members from across the private, public and third sectors.

Entry requirements

- **Good first or second class undergraduate degree (or equivalent)**
- **Organisational leadership/board experience, or at least three years' senior management experience with board-level access**
- **Access to a live board-level governance challenge as identified in your proposal**
- **English language proficiency (IELTS 7.0, with no element below 6.0 – see website)**

Applicants who possess exceptional organisational experience but do not meet the standard academic requirements are welcome to apply and may be considered for entry on to the programme on a case-by-case basis.



Benefits of the programme?

FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Develop your skills as a director, including your technical skills, soft skills and ability to handle risk
- Understand board member roles and how to add value for highly effective board contributions
- Make informed decisions for long-term competitive advantage
- Have professional recognition and differentiation when applying for board positions
- Engage with leading academic experts and industry practitioners
- Apply rigorous research and frameworks to consider your own director skills and capabilities

FOR ORGANISATIONS

- Participants learn how to enhance board effectiveness for better organisational performance and critically evaluate decision-making and judgements at board level
- Engage with private, public and third-sector board members
- Apply rigorous research and frameworks to address board-level governance issues



Learning



This a flexible part-time programme, with each module consisting of one or two-day workshops combined with self-study. There is pre-reading and research shared as course materials.

Each module, led by our faculty, is delivered through interactive sessions combining research, theoretical and real-world perspectives. There is continuous peer learning with group work, activities and presentations.

Our cohort participants typically come from a range of industries with different board experiences, providing opportunities for networking and exploration of thinking.

Your assignments will be focused on you in your organisation and on a group case-study.

Programme structure

QUALIFICATION	STAGES	LENGTH	FOCUS	MODULES			
Postgraduate Certificate	Stage 1	8 months, part time	Director development and understanding your board	• Module 1 (2 days) Building Board and Director Effectiveness	• Module 2 (2 days) Investor Relations, Governance and Innovation	• Module 3 (2 days) Handling Risk at Board Level	
Postgraduate Diploma	Stage 2	8 months, part time	Board dynamics and offers mentoring for you as a director	• Module 4 (2 days) Board Information and Communication	• Module 5 (2 days) Board Reputation, Responsibility and Public Relations	• Module 7a (2 days) Mentoring and Coaching for Board Directors	
Masters*	Stage 3	8 months, part time	Specialist sector expertise (private, public and third sectors), and applied research into a real-world board-level governance issue	• Module 6 (2 days) Research and Analytical Skills for Board Directors	• Module 7b (1 day) Private, Public or Third Sector Boards	• Module 8 Business Challenge	• Module 9 (1 or 2 days) Annual Board Conference

* For the full Masters programme, all modules (180 credits) must be completed

Stage 1 Postgraduate Certificate

The PGCert (Stage 1) is focused on director development. Building a personal awareness of strengths, limitations, skills and capabilities. This stage draws attention to director contribution and frames stewardship of the organisation, and due diligence in your leadership qualities. You will learn how to work through ambiguous issues, engaging with the board to reach a consensus.

1	2	3
BUILDING BOARD AND DIRECTOR EFFECTIVENESS	INVESTOR RELATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND INNOVATION	HANDLING RISK AT BOARD LEVEL
Written assignment: 3,000 words (60%) Case study (40%)	Written assignment: 3,000 words (60%) Case study (40%)	Written assignment: 3,000 words (60%) Case study (40%)
1 x 2-day workshop	1 x 2-day workshop	1 x 2-day workshop
20 credits	20 credits	20 credits
8 months		

Module 1

Building Board and Director Effectiveness

Topics include:

- Roles and responsibilities at board level
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- Setting the tone and culture at the top
- Influencing skills at board level as an individual contribution
- Enabling strategy design and execution
- The nature of dysfunctional boards
- Succession planning
- Balancing short-term and longer term board value.

Module 2

Investor Relations, Governance and Innovation

Topics include:

- Understanding board-level impact on processes, decisions, strategic monitoring of activities, diversity and dynamics
- The sustainable effect of these outcomes for:
 - internal stakeholders (e.g. the board, executive, management and owners)
 - external influences (e.g. regulations, competition, collaboration, lobby groups and society)
 - organisational change and innovation (e.g. survival, growth and investment strategy).
- Investor relations
- Ownership types - private, family owned, public-equity owned, public (or state owned) and charitable structures
- Examining 'common good competitiveness' vs profit orientation, short-termism, or shareholder/self-interest.

Module 3

Handling Risk at Board Level

Topics include:

- The relationship between risk and uncertainty in relation to:
 - behavioural economics and cognitive bias
 - accounting and finance
 - handling conflict and crises
- How boards and board members interpret and report risk
- Board readiness as an enabler for innovation and transformation
- Appetite and tolerance for risk
- The link between risk and internal/external factors.

Stage 2 Postgraduate Diploma*

The PGDip BPD (Stage 2) is designed to focus on board dynamics and emphasise quality communication and information sharing. It also highlights the importance of reputation and responsibility at board level. This stage supports your personal development, offering mentoring and coaching to enhance your director performance.

* Henley Business School may launch Stage 2 following a student’s successful completion of the PGCert BPD, this cannot be guaranteed and is subject to minimum student numbers being reached. A decision on whether to launch a future stage will only be made following completion of the preceding stage.

4	5	7a
BOARD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	BOARD REPUTATION, RESPONSIBILITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	MENTORING AND COACHING FOR BOARD DIRECTORS
Written assignment: 3,000 words (60%)	Written assignment: 3,000 words (60%)	Reflective diary: 3,000 words (60%)
Case study (40%)	Case study (40%)	One-to-one interview (40%)
2-day workshop	2-day workshop	2-day workshop
20 credits	20 credits	20 credits
8 months		

Module 4

Board Information and Communication

Topics include:

- Handling structure, volume and quality of information for better board dialogue
- Knowing the board and what matters to the organisation
- Best practices, tools and techniques
- Questioning technique; how to delve deeper and more broadly to inform decision-making

Module 5

Board Reputation, Responsibility and Public Relations

Topics include:

- Reputation and responsibility at board level
- Governance execution and organisational sustainability
- Public relations, engaging with the press and media
- Managing reputational risk and crisis
- Broader social and environmental issues, how to communicate the organisation’s purpose
- The impact and practice of lobbying and networking

Module 7a

Mentoring and Coaching for Board Directors

Topics include:

- Mentoring workshops
- One-to-one interview session focused on your personal development
- Reflecting on your own behaviour, strengths and weaknesses
- Dealing with change, difficult situations, working in teams and self-awareness

Stage 3 Masters (MA)*

The MA BPD (Stage 3) develops your analytical and research skills to facilitate governance issues or dilemmas. It also gives more specialist sector expertise (private, public and third sectors), including an opportunity to put this learning into practice by responding to a real-world board-level business challenge.

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6	7b	8	9
RESEARCH AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS FOR BOARD DIRECTORS	PRIVATE, PUBLIC OR THIRD SECTOR BOARDS	BOARD BUSINESS CHALLENGE	ANNUAL BOARD CONFERENCE
Attendance and participation compulsory	Written assignment: 2,500 words (100%)	Report: 12,000 words (100%)	Conference paper: 200-word abstract and 3,000-word paper (50%) Presentation Q&A (50%)
2-day workshop	1-day workshop	6-month research project	Conference (1 or 2 days)
0 credits	0 credits	40 credits	20 credits
8 months			

Module 6

Research and Analytical Skills for Board Directors

Topics include:

- Board-level Business Challenge question
- Qualitative and quantitative approaches to enquiry and research
- Relevant practical and ethical research methods
- Development of core research and analytical skills and techniques

Module 7b

Private, Public or Third Sector Boards

Topics include:

- Facilitating sector-specific insight
- Networking with practitioner panels from within a particular sector
- Gain sector-specific guidance and advice to develop your Business Challenge

Module 8

Business Challenge

Topics include:

- Executing a board-level governance research project addressing a previously identified problem or dilemma
- Addressing a live, in-practice issue within an organisation
- Applying the approaches introduced in the Research and Analytical Skills module

Module 9

Board Annual Conference

Topics include:

- Disseminating key learnings from your Business Challenge to a wider stakeholder audience
- Submitting and presenting your paper to the Director’s Forum Board Annual Conference
- Develop your writing, presentation and oral communication skills
- Evaluating your findings and research impact in relation to both theory and practice

FEE

Each stage costs £10,000

TEACHING STAFF

Throughout your studies, you will be supported by the Programme Director, world-class professors and faculty.

Programme Director: Dr Nadeem Khan

Nadeem lectures in governance, policy and leadership at Henley Business School. He completed his PhD research at Henley in the field of strategy and strategic behaviour of the firm. He gained professional experience in the UK and international multinational environments prior to running his own business.



LOCATION

The programme is delivered at Henley's Greenlands campus or at venues chosen by our partner organisations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Henley Business School

Visit: henley.ac.uk/MABPD

Email: custom@henley.ac.uk

Visit the website to meet other teaching faculty including:

Professor Andrew Kakabadse



Dr Caroline Rook



Professor Nada Korac Kakabadse



Dr Filipe Morais



Dr Jessica Yang



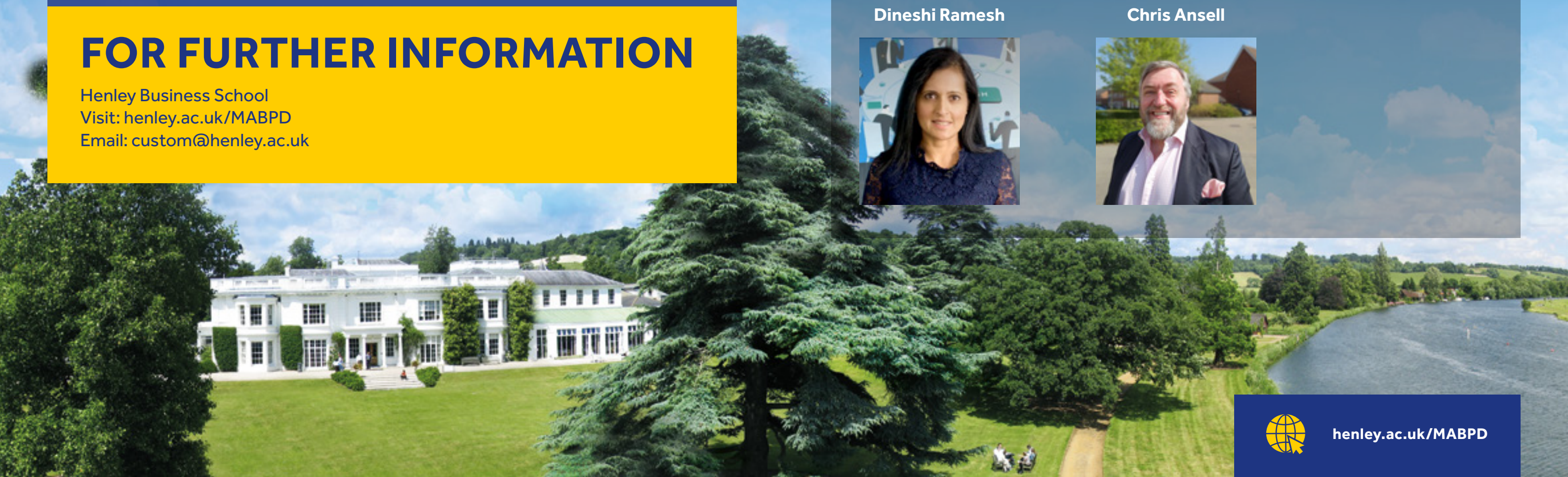
Garry Honey



Dineshi Ramesh



Chris Ansell




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