

Prashan Karunaratne
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Biography

Award-winning Senior Lecturer, Dr Prashan Karunaratne, from Macquarie Business School, is well-regarded for his innovative approach to driving student success through developing an active learning culture.

Prashan is the Course Director of the Bachelor of Commerce in Macquarie Business School.

Prashan Karunaratne is an inspirational and innovative teacher of economics and business analytics at Macquarie University. His enthusiasm for teaching, and passion for improving student outcomes, have inspired and engaged tens of thousands of students for more than a decade. He nurtures students to develop a desire to engage and is a firm believer that the learning journey can benefit both teachers and students. Inspiring students to want to learn – by emphasising the 'why' of learning, and empowering students to navigate their own learning journey – by focusing on the 'how', creates valuable experiences in his classroom and beyond. This highlights the 'wow' moments that students will remember in years to come.

Prashan Karunaratne began as a student at Macquarie University in 2000, teaching at the University in 2003, and lecturing in the Macquarie Business School's core economics in 2006. He has somewhat of a cult following among students, with his well-known catchphrase "#EveryoneSayWow!".

Prashan says his focus is on developing an active learning culture, which is particularly important when teaching more theoretical subjects: "Learning business and economics can appear to be dry, so it's often challenging for a lecturer to engage students," he says. "I redesigned the curriculum to instil the 'why' of learning, using threshold concepts, and the 'how' of learning, utilising learning taxonomies."

Prashan works closely with industry, ensuring that Macquarie Business School achieves its mission of being an applied and engaged business school. In 2020, Prashan worked with McCrindle, to research and produce the Lost Business Report, for the Business Events Council of Australia. This report was in turn used to lobby the federal government for support to the business events sector.

Prashan also works in the Optus U program, training and upskilling Optus staff from across Australia in Data Analytics and Business Analytics in the Getting Started with Analytics program.

Prashan is engaged in a number of projects across Macquarie University – from helping design a brand new unit for MQ2020, to using his research in the area of learning and teaching in business education to run workshops for staff. Prashan has also been integral to taking the Macquarie Business School's knowledge and reputation well beyond the university, with his enthusiastic utilisation of online learning platforms: "I upload my lectures to my YouTube channel *Prashan Economics*, which has amassed more than 72,000 views and over 440,000 minutes of watch time," he notes. Prashan is also heavily involved with Macquarie's Widening Participation Unit – LEAP via LEAP Roadshows and LEAP inROADs. This year, he leads a team of Macquarie Business School L&T champions in partnership with Macquarie's Widening Participation Unit – LEAP, to launch the National Equity Program for Business Education – to create aspirations in equity students for higher education. This team helped develop HSC Study Labs - HSC Business Studies. These unprecedented times of the post-pandemic world present an even greater urgency to address equity groups regarding their aspirations to higher education.

Prashan is also a part of the team that designs, develops and delivers the University's award-winning Excel courses on the Coursera platform – reaching more than one million learners globally. He is also the course instructor for these Excel courses which are utilised by international organisations such as the UNDP, UNICEF, and it has also been translated into Arabic by the government of the UAE.

Prashan Karunaratne received a 2019 Australian Award for University Teaching – Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning Award – *the Australian government-endorsed, national university teaching awards. The citation was his award was: "For excellence in engaging, equipping and empowering students and lecturers to achieve transformative and equitable outcomes in Economics and Excel – in classrooms, boardrooms and beyond."*

Prashan also received the inaugural Australian Business Deans Council Network Award – Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning in 2020: *"The strength of Prashan's application is that it covers three innovations in the Beginning in a core first year course, Microeconomic Principles, Widening Participation – in Australia and overseas, and the MOOC on Excel Skills for Business, and has numerous impressive awards."*

Prashan has travelled extensively across South and South East Asia running workshops for students and teachers across high schools and universities – equipping students with the importance of economics and empowering teachers with best-practice teaching methodologies.

Since 2020, Prashan has been the Faculty Adviser for Enactus Macquarie, a student society that uses business principles and entrepreneurial action to drive social justice and environmental impact projects in the community. There are Enactus societies in most universities across Australia, and at the annual national championships, where projects are showcased, Enactus Macquarie were the National Champions in 2020.

He has published in *The Lighthouse* – commenting on the business and economics landscape during the global pandemic. During the pandemic, Prashan's expert commentary was also sort by the *BBC*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*,

Smart Investor, *AusBiz* and several industry magazines.

Prashan is currently the Course Director for the Bachelor of Commerce as well as the unit convenor of the Bachelor of Commerce Capstone unit – where students in mixed-major teams work towards addressing a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal – collaboratively, sustainably, and profitably - using the knowledge and skills of commerce and their major.

In 2021, Prashan was invited to present his work in the United Kingdom and the European Union to showcase his latest innovations in the teaching and learning of economics and business. Prashan has been invited to contribute 1 of the 20 chapters in the European Union, *Erasmus+* project, *Shaping a Sustainable Future - Innovative Teaching Practices for Educating Responsible Leaders*. This handbook was published in 2022.

You can get to know more about Prashan here, and get to know more about Prashan's teaching philosophy, here.

Employment

Senior Lecturer (Teaching and Leadership)

Senior Lecturer

Department of Actuarial Studies and Business Analytics

Macquarie University

1 Jan 2021 → present

Research outputs

Budget relief for motorists and most taxpayers – but opportunities missed by the Treasurer

Karunaratne, P., De Mello, L. & King, M. (ed.), 31 Mar 2022, The Lighthouse.

Petrol pain to ease, cash for mental health and one-off payments: what to expect in the 2022 Federal Budget

De Mello, L., Cutler, H., Karunaratne, P. & King, M. (ed.), 24 Mar 2022, The Lighthouse.

Agility and excellence in business – A transdisciplinary capstone course on sustainability using the knowledge and skills of commerce

Karunaratne, P. S. M., 2022, *Shaping a sustainable future: innovative teaching practices for educating responsible leaders*. Bustamante, S., Saltevo, E., Schmitz, M. & Martinovic, M. (eds.). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, p. 257-272 16 p. (Berlin School of Economics and Law – Research Series; vol. 72).

Lego serious play for economics lessons

Karunaratne, P. S. M., 2021, *DEE 2021: The Developments in Economics Education Conference Handbook*. Online: The Economics Network

How universities can help fill the skill gap in Australia

De Mello, L. & Karunaratne, P., 18 Aug 2020, The Lighthouse.

Jobs crisis: when will Australians work again?

De Mello, L. & Karunaratne, P., 14 May 2020, The Lighthouse.

Lost business report: Impacts of COVID-19 on the business events industry

McCrindle & Karunaratne, P. S. M., Apr 2020, Sydney: Business Events Council of Australia. 16 p.

Data analytics and the healthcare market: a book review of moneyball medicine — thriving in the new datadriven healthcare market

Karunaratne, P. S. M., 2020, In: *Journal of Health, Safety and Environment*. 36, 3, p. 207-211 5 p.

Transformative learning and teaching in economics: the why of learning and teaching economics using threshold concepts : the how of learning and teaching economics using learning taxonomies

Karunaratne, P. S. M., 2019, (Unpublished) 280 p.

Transforming the economics curriculum by integrating threshold concepts

Karunaratne, P., 13 Jul 2016, *ACE 2016 Annual Conference*. Adelaide: The Economic Society of Australia, 21 p.

Transforming the economics curriculum by integrating threshold concepts

Karunaratne, P. S. M., Breyer, Y. A. & Wood, L. N., 13 Jun 2016, In: Education and Training. 58, 5, p. 492-509 18 p.

An Import demand function for the Australian economy using Vector Autoregression techniques

Karunaratne, P. S. M., 2013, *Proceedings Book of ICEFMO, 2013: Malaysia Handbook on the Economic, Finance and Management Outlooks*. PAK Publishing Group, p. 736-755 20 p.

An Import demand function for the Australian economy using vector autoregression techniques

Karunaratne, P., 2012, In: Expo 2012 Higher Degree Research : book of abstracts. p. 48 1 p.

Microeconomic policy

Karunaratne, P., 2011, In: Ecodate. 25, 2, p. 6-8 3 p.

Prizes**Australian Awards for University Teaching - Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Students Learning**

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 2019

Australian Business Deans Council Award for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 2020

Faculty Excellence Award

Daczko, Nathan (Recipient), Spence, Natalie (Recipient), Bishop, Melanie (Recipient), Di Bona, Rex (Recipient), Jamie, Joanne (Recipient), Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), Kosnik, Matthew (Recipient), Owers, Matt (Recipient), Rodger, Alison (Recipient), Spittler, Lee (Recipient), Valckenborgh, Frank (Recipient) & Westaway, KE (Recipient), 10 Dec 2021

Faculty of Science and Engineering Awards – Faculty Excellence Award – Excellence in Inter-Departmental Collaboration

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 10 Dec 2021

Highly Commended - Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence 2023

Jafarzadeh, Hamed (Team leader) & Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 15 Nov 2023

Macquarie Business School Educational Leader Award

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 22 Aug 2019

Macquarie Business School Education Award - Student-nominated Award

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 18 Aug 2021

Macquarie Business School Teaching Excellence Award

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 22 Aug 2019

Macquarie University Vice-Chancellor's Award for Programs that Enhance Learning

Breyer, Yvonne (Team leader), Keighley, Timothy (Recipient), Goody, Philip (Recipient), Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient) & Sollars, Nathan (Recipient), 31 Oct 2018

Macquarie University Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 1 Nov 2017

Most Outstanding Faculty Advisor - Enactus Australia

Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 9 Jul 2021

Outstanding Educator Award for Transformation
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 19 Apr 2018

Student-led Award for Excellence in Teaching
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 1 Nov 2017

Vice-Chancellor's Learning & Teaching, Educational Leader Award: Highly-Commended Finalist
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), Nov 2019

Vice-Chancellor's Learning & Teaching Student-Nominated Award: Winner
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), 30 Nov 2021

Vice-Chancellor's Learning & Teaching, Teaching Excellence Award: Highly-Commended Finalist
Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient), Nov 2019

Winner - Vice-Chancellor's Educational Leader Award
Daczko, Nathan (Team leader), Spence, Natalie (Recipient), Owers, Matt (Recipient), Dawson, Joanne (Recipient), Karunaratne, Prashan (Recipient) & Chareunsky, Andrea (Recipient), 21 Nov 2022

Impacts

Activating Commerce Knowledge, Skills, and Entrepreneurship to Advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Enactus Macquarie
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

COVID-19 and the Economics of Supply - Lessons, Applications, and Forecasts: Media, Industry, and Government Impact
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

Engaging Equity Students in Business Education: LEAP into Commerce across Regional, Rural, and Remote NSW
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

Excel Skills for Industry: Excel Skills for Business Forecasting for Coursera + Getting Started with Analytics for Optus U
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant) & Hamed Jafarzadeh (Participant)

Impacting the Andragogy of Sustainability: the Trans-Disciplinary Bachelor of Commerce Capstone Unit
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

Re-imagining Teaching and Learning Across South and East Asia: Research-informed Transformative Teacher Workshops and Authentic Student Lectures
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

Reviving the Business Events Industry: Research Report Results in \$50 Million Policy Action
Prashan Karunaratne (Participant)

Transformation Learners' Lives on a Global Scale: Excel Skills for Business
Yvonne Breyer (Participant), Prashan Karunaratne (Participant), Timothy Keighley (Participant), Leonie Tickle (Participant) & Philip Goody (Participant)