

# PHD APPLICATION SERVICE

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## Personal Statement

My decision to pursue doctoral study stems from a deep-seated interest in sustainable corporate governance and ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) integration, fields in which I have gained both practical and academic grounding. I am applying for a PhD in Business Studies with the aim of contributing original, policy-relevant research on how ESG frameworks influence corporate decision-making, stakeholder alignment, and long-term value creation in emerging and developed economies. My long-term goal is to bridge the divide between ESG theory and practice—either in academia, through teaching and publishing, or in the policy space, via advisory work with regulatory or multilateral institutions.

The motivation for this research agenda grew from my consultancy work at Altura Advisory, where I advised corporates in the UK on ESG strategy aligned with evolving regulatory standards such as the SFDR and TCFD. Through strategic reviews, disclosure audits, and stakeholder mapping exercises, I observed a recurring tension between compliance-led ESG activities and value-oriented, stakeholder-driven practices. This disparity sparked a series of independent research projects, including a white paper I self-published in 2024 titled *"Evolving Metrics in ESG Disclosure,"* which critically analysed the inconsistencies in ESG scoring across leading agencies. These experiences shaped the conceptual focus of my intended doctoral research—exploring how ESG frameworks are operationalised in strategy and what conditions allow firms to embed them meaningfully in governance systems.

I have cultivated an interdisciplinary skillset suitable for this inquiry. My MSc in Strategic Business & Sustainability from the University of Warwick offered rigorous training in research design, stakeholder theory, institutional analysis, and strategic change management. My dissertation—"Stakeholder Alignment in ESG Strategy: A Case Study of European Infrastructure Firms"—used a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with BSC (Balanced Scorecard) analysis. This built on my undergraduate education in Business & Finance from the University of Delhi, where I graduated with First Class Honours and took electives in Environmental Economics and Strategic Finance. Alongside academic work, I contributed as a freelance research consultant at Academic Minds, delivering over 25 postgraduate-level research papers on ESG, sustainable finance, and stakeholder governance—experiences that sharpened my writing, referencing, and critical analysis skills.

Professionally, I've held roles in both corporate and consulting settings. As a Strategy Consultant at Greenspan Infrastructure (India), I advised clients on PPP strategy, renewable energy funding, and CSR-aligned investment planning. I collaborated with local governments on regulatory assessments and drafted governance frameworks that aligned social mandates with financial goals. These experiences helped me grasp both the promise and limitations of ESG integration in infrastructure sectors, particularly in policy-fragmented environments.

Beyond my academic and professional background, I bring with me a personal commitment to inclusive development. Having grown up in a transitional economy, I've witnessed how capital misallocation, short-termism, and poor stakeholder engagement can stifle both enterprise and equity. This has deeply influenced my commitment to responsible capitalism and ethical strategy, values I aim to embed in my doctoral research.

As I prepare for PhD-level work, I recognise that I will need to deepen my knowledge of advanced qualitative and quantitative methods, particularly multi-level modelling and comparative policy analysis. I intend to take advantage of university-led research workshops and doctoral training seminars to further develop these competencies. I'm also excited by the prospect of engaging with faculty and peers across disciplines—something I see as essential for tackling complex, real-world sustainability questions.

I am specifically drawn to institutions and supervisors that value applied, interdisciplinary research. My shortlisted universities are known for their strength in business ethics, sustainable strategy, and ESG-related research. I believe I would thrive in a setting that fosters both independent thinking and collaborative inquiry.

Ultimately, I view the PhD as more than an academic exercise—it is a vehicle to challenge prevailing assumptions in corporate governance and to offer evidence-based pathways for a fairer, greener economy. With my background in strategy, ESG consulting, and applied research, I am confident in my ability to contribute meaningfully to the academic community while also creating knowledge that can inform practice and policy.