

ISM

University of  
Management  
and Economics

# Choosing to be **REAL** 2030

# ISM 2030 – Choosing to be REAL

We live in a time when access to answers is no longer the problem. Answers are everywhere.

Generated instantly. Scaled endlessly. Delivered with confidence.

But the hardest part was never the answer. It was judgement.

What matters now is not who can retrieve information fastest, but who can decide wisely when conditions are unclear, pressure is high, and consequences are real.

This is the world ISM is preparing people for.

Artificial intelligence is changing how businesses operate. Data shapes more decisions. Power is shifting across economies, institutions, and societies. The future is not simply changing faster – it is becoming harder to read. Uncertainty is no longer an interruption. It is the environment.

In such a world, knowledge remains essential, but it is no longer enough. Leaders will need more than expertise. They will need judgement. They will need the confidence to act without false certainty, the discipline to think independently, and the courage to take responsibility for decisions that technology cannot make for them.

This is where universities are tested. If higher education only transfers knowledge, it will fall behind. Too often we see more declarations than actions, discuss change more than we bring it about, and produce research to be published rather than applied, eventually remaining on paper instead of being used to inform society and decision-makers or to contribute to



practical solutions. If we describe change better than we create it, we will fail the people and organisations that depend on us.

That is why ISM chooses to be REAL. Responsible. Entrepreneurial. Adaptive. Learning.

**Responsible**, because decisions stay human, even when technology becomes more powerful.

**Entrepreneurial**, because progress begins with initiative, not permission.

**Adaptive**, because resilience matters when reality shifts.

**Learning**, because growth is never finished.

**REAL is not a slogan.** It is a standard. It means developing people who can think clearly, act courageously, and create value in conditions that do not come with instructions. It means advancing

research that matters beyond publication. It means building a learning model that uses digital and AI tools thoughtfully, while remaining firmly people-led. And it means strengthening a community where trust is strong, expectations are clear, and the status quo can be challenged with openness and respect.

Over the next five years, this choice will shape our direction: strengthening entrepreneurial thinking, increasing the real-world impact of research, expanding our international reach, and reinforcing lifelong learning.

At the center of this ambition is a clear goal: to develop a distinctive ISM Method that helps people not only know more, but become more capable of deciding, acting, and leading when the future refuses to be predictable.

Because real growth does not begin with certainty. It begins with readiness. And readiness begins with commitment. Commitment to always be one step ahead.

**Prof. Dr Dalius Misiūnas**  
President of ISM University of  
Management and Economics



**In a world that feels  
increasingly artificial,  
we choose to be REAL.**

# Context

Over the past 25 years, ISM has grown into one of Lithuania's most recognised universities.

Established in 1999 by BI Norwegian Business School, ISM draws on a Nordic academic tradition shaped by openness, inclusivity and a commitment to high standards.

Its programmes in economics and management have consistently been recognised among the strongest\* in Lithuania and its graduates are valued for their professional readiness, leadership potential and ambition to contribute positively to society.

This standing is supported by national research assessment results. ISM received the highest score in social sciences, underscoring strong academic performance and growing impact. International recognition further strengthens ISM's position.

Building on these foundations, the most recent strategic period marked a significant stage in the university's development. ISM expanded its student body by 41 per cent, strengthened its international profile, and significantly increased its revenue base. Over the period, revenue grew by 200 per cent, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15 per cent.

Among the key milestones during this period were ISM becoming the first university in the Baltic region to receive AACSB accreditation, placing it among the top six per cent of business schools worldwide,



and becoming the first university in Lithuania to be awarded the Five Palmes of Excellence by Eduniversal. Together, these achievements affirm ISM's position as an institution that combines academic excellence with international credibility.

While these achievements strengthen ISM's international standing, the national, regional and international higher education landscape presents growing challenges. In recent years, many institutions in Lithuania have responded to demographic and competitive pressures by lowering admission requirements. ISM takes a different path – continuing to raise the minimum admission score required for entry into its study programmes, ensuring the readiness needed for meaningful learning. This reflects the belief that quality education begins with high admission standards.

At the same time, broader developments are reshaping what society expects from universities. In this environment, knowledge remains essential, but universities are increasingly expected to prepare students who can apply this knowledge in complex,

*\*Based on evaluations by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).*

fast-changing situations and take initiative under uncertainty.

It is within this context that ISM enters its next stage of development. The university is strengthening digital competences, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and enabling continuous learning across different stages of professional and personal life by connecting degree and non-degree education within a broader lifelong learning ecosystem. As Vilnius becomes more international, expectations placed on both individuals and organisations continue to rise. Globally oriented students and professionals seek education aligned

with international standards, while businesses and public institutions face rapidly evolving, skills-based demands. ISM is well positioned to respond to these developments, serving as a growth platform for entrepreneurs, experts and executives in business and public life.

Co-created with the ISM community, the strategy serves as a shared compass – anchored in ISM’s mission, vision and values. It aligns learners, faculty and partners to develop responsible, entrepreneurial leaders who strengthen organisations and society and contribute to a more capable, resilient state.



# Vision, Mission, Values

## Vision | WHAT DO WE WANT TO BECOME BY 2030

**A European business university recognised for one step ahead mindset.**

Our vision is to be a European business university defined by its **REAL** approach, high academic standards, impactful research, growing international presence, and a lifelong learning ecosystem.

## Mission | WHY WE EXIST

**Challenge present. Inspire future. Empower change.**

Our mission is to serve as a platform dedicated to developing responsible, entrepreneurial leaders who continue learning throughout every stage of their careers.

Together with our business and societal partners, we create research-based knowledge that enables ethical decisions and drives real impact in society.

Our community takes responsibility for creating the future.

## Values | THE MAIN PRINCIPLES THAT WE ARE COMMITTING TO IN OUR BEHAVIORS AND DECISIONS

# R

**Responsibility**  
to Respect and  
Delivery

Responsibility means caring for our students, supporting equal opportunities, and practicing social responsibility. We respect our community by openly sharing information, asking for feedback, and reacting quickly.

# E

**Entrepreneurial**  
Mindset and  
Courage

Entrepreneurship means willingness to question, taking risks and learning from failure. We question assumptions and foster an environment where constructive criticism is welcomed, and innovation is encouraged. Courage for us means challenging the status quo and thinking one step ahead.

# A

**Excellence Through**  
Continuous Growth  
and **Adaptability**

Adaptability enables us to remain effective in changing circumstances and is guided by a commitment to excellence, while learning fuels continuous growth, curiosity, and resilience. Excellence means striving for ongoing improvement.

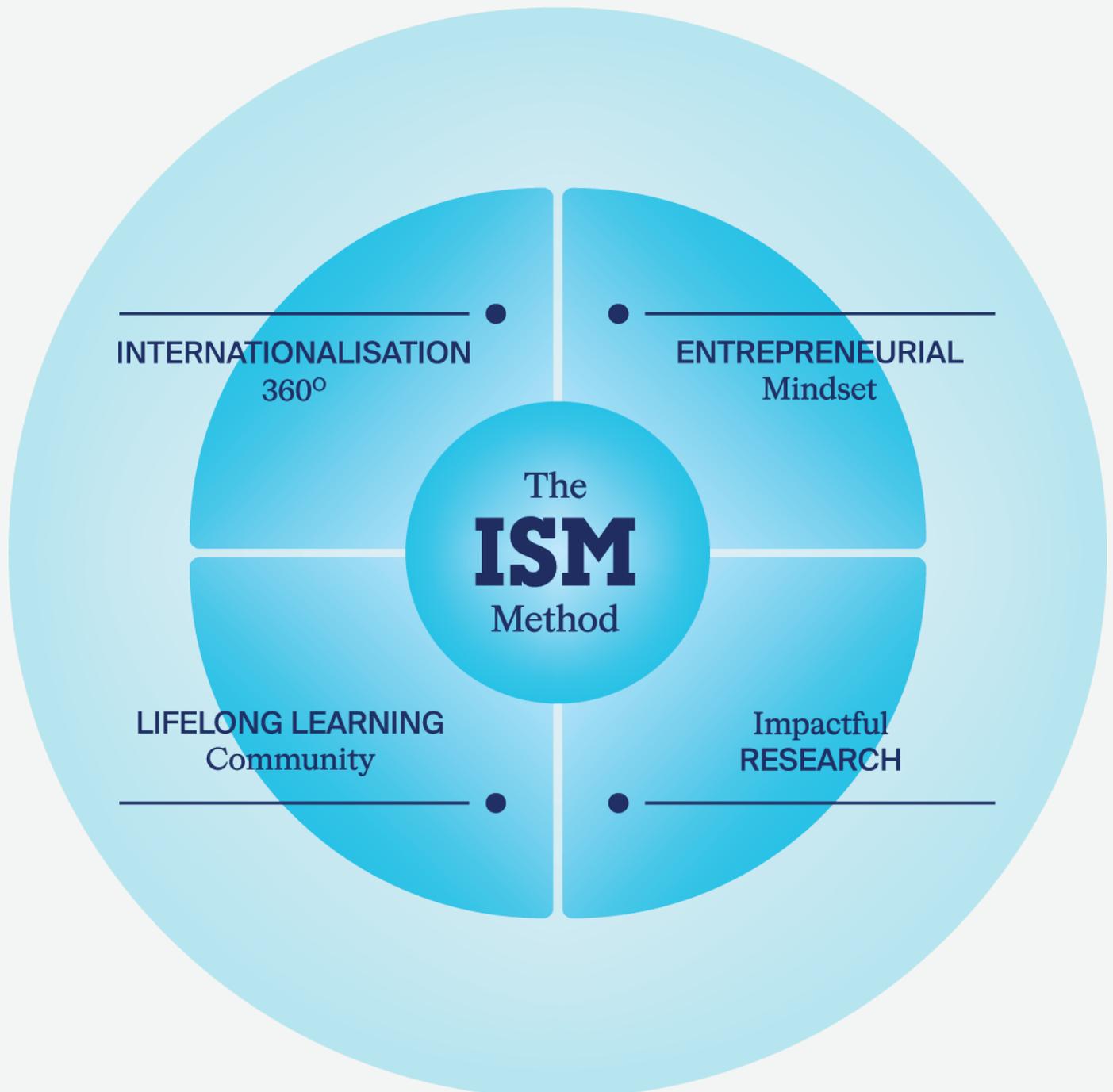
# L

**Community**  
of Lifelong  
**Learners**

We see our community as our greatest strength. We are committed to continuous learning, curiosity and growth. We treat each other with respect, act with personal and shared responsibility, and value diverse perspectives that help us learn and grow.

# Strategic directions

**The ISM Method** is the core of ISM's strategy, built on REAL learning principles. The strategic directions develop this core through entrepreneurship, internationalisation, impactful research and lifelong learning.



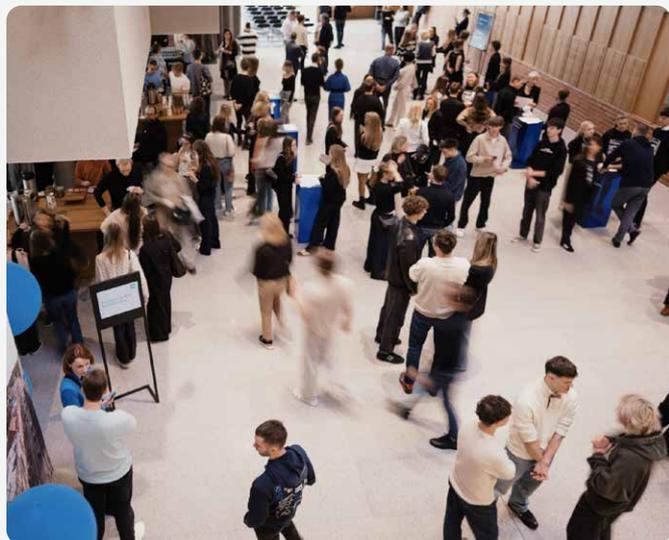
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# 1. Strategic direction - Unique ISM Method

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## Objective

The unique ISM method aims to develop graduates who can think clearly, act responsibly and make sound decisions in an AI-driven world. Our goal is to educate people who understand technological tools and their ethical implications, but who also possess broad humanistic foundations – the ability to reason, judge and act in uncertain situations. ISM seeks to build a learning framework that prepares students for real decisions in real contexts, balancing collaborative learning with opportunities for individual choice and personalised development.



## Initiatives

### 1.1. Transform final thesis processes to strengthen academic responsibility and rigorous thinking

Transform thesis formats and assessment across all study levels to reflect a changing academic and professional environment, introducing interim defences and stronger accountability for reasoning and academic integrity. These changes will reinforce critical thinking, deepen students' ability to justify analysis, and ensure that thesis work consistently reflects rigorous and responsible academic practice.

### 1.2. Implement interdisciplinary capstone projects focused on real-world problem-solving

Launch capstone modules in bachelor's and master's programmes where students address global, industry-based or complex societal challenges. These projects will require interdisciplinary collaboration across programmes and the ability to combine insights from different business disciplines into coherent, real-world solutions, strengthening analytical judgement and decision-making in unfamiliar contexts.

### 1.3. Expand practical learning and entrepreneurial, initiative-driven thinking

Increase the number of practical projects from the first study year and encourage early exposure to entrepreneurial learning. Students will be guided to take ownership, propose solutions and work on real tasks. Thus cultivating a mindset oriented towards action, creativity and responsibility. Projects will include flexible roles and options, allowing students to pursue individual strengths and interests while contributing to team outcomes.

### 1.4. Strengthen Liberal Arts, AI and Business Integration

Ensure a strong liberal arts foundation that helps students understand human behaviour and make sound judgements under uncertainty. Expand AI literacy by providing unified access to core AI tools, developing AI-proof assessments and supporting faculty training, while embedding AI-enabled learning activities across programmes. At the same time, strengthen collaboration with business partners so that practical content, guest lectures, projects and capstone experiences remain closely connected to real-world challenges and evolving industry needs.

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## 2. Strategic direction - Developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset

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### Objective

At ISM, an entrepreneurial mindset is understood as the capacity to recognise opportunities, take initiative and create value in conditions of uncertainty. It involves experimentation, the thoughtful mobilisation of resources and the willingness to learn from setbacks while always being guided by a strong sense of responsibility for economic, social and environmental impact. As technological change accelerates and careers become less predictable, developing this mindset alongside strong disciplinary knowledge is essential.

ISM seeks to empower students to make a positive difference, whether they choose to contribute within established organisations or pursue the creation of new ventures. This ambition is realised through problem-based and experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and increased support for student and faculty-led initiatives, enabling learners to test ideas, develop projects and create meaningful value during their studies.



### Initiatives

#### 2.1. Integrate entrepreneurial education across all programmes, supported by AI skills labs

Entrepreneurial education will be embedded across all ISM study programmes and levels, ensuring that every student develops an entrepreneurial mindset

and practical innovation skills throughout their studies. A key component will be the development of AI Skills Labs, created in partnership with industry, where students will gain access to advanced AI and digital tools and receive hands-on training in applying them for idea generation, problem solving, and venture development.

#### 2.2. Develop entrepreneurial learning programmes for diverse audiences

To broaden access to entrepreneurial learning, ISM will develop new programmes and educational products tailored to different audiences and stages of learning - from high school students to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as executives. These initiatives will create opportunities for learners at every stage to build entrepreneurial competencies, experiment with emerging technologies, and develop solutions to real-world challenges.

#### 2.3. Strengthen platforms supporting student and faculty initiatives

Establish the Entrepreneurship Centre as a hub that unites entrepreneurial activities across ISM, develops programmes, provides mentoring and resources, and connects students, alumni and faculty with industry professionals. Create a dedicated on-campus space where founders can work on their ideas, meet like-minded peers and engage with mentors and partners.

#### 2.4. Position ISM within Lithuania's entrepreneurial ecosystem

Collaborate with businesses, by co-creating live challenges and project briefs, engaging partners as mentors and evaluators, and showcasing student and alumni initiatives through regular campus-based demo days and entrepreneurship events – strengthening ISM's role in Lithuania's innovation landscape and contributing to its ambition to become a strong European hub where future founders meet, learn, and grow their ideas into startups.

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## 3. Strategic direction - Internationalisation

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### Objective

Internationalisation at ISM is about cultivating a diverse and globally connected academic environment that enhances our standing in Europe while opening wider horizons for students and faculty. Through the development of a dual-campus model and deeper academic partnerships, ISM aims to offer a distinctly European educational experience while strengthening its position as an internationally competitive business school.



### Initiatives

#### 3.1. Explore the potential of a second European campus

Assess the strategic case and feasible models for establishing a second ISM campus within Europe. This initiative will evaluate potential locations, partnership opportunities, regulatory considerations, and financial sustainability. A second campus would expand ISM's European footprint, broaden the student recruitment

base, and strengthen access to international faculty, industry partners, and innovation ecosystems.

#### 3.2. Expand European student admissions in target markets

Increase recruitment efforts across selected European markets to diversify the student body and strengthen ISM's European identity. This will involve targeted marketing, stronger collaboration with international recruitment partners, participation in European education fairs, and the development of attractive programme offerings for European students. The goal is to create a more culturally diverse learning environment that enriches classroom discussions and enhances the international experience for all students.

#### 3.3. Position ISM among leading European business schools

Strengthen ISM's positioning as a European business school through more visible participation in academic and professional networks, strategic partnerships with European institutions, and increased representation in international conferences and forums. This initiative will also focus on improving ISM's communication strategy, highlighting the school's European perspective, international faculty expertise, and strong connections with European business and academic communities.

#### 3.4. Achieve international distinction through accreditation and rankings

Pursue AMBA accreditation and prepare ISM for inclusion in the Financial Times Business School rankings. This initiative will focus on strengthening institutional data systems, improving career tracking and graduate outcome reporting and enhancing curriculum relevance. Achieving these milestones will enhance ISM's global visibility, credibility, and competitiveness among leading international business schools.

## 4. Strategic direction - Impactful Research

### Objective

Alongside this ambition, ISM is committed to high-impact research that reinforces its international presence and creates meaningful value for academia, business and public policy. Our goal is to build a strong research ecosystem focused on strategic themes, raise the quality and visibility of our publications, and ensure that ISM's expertise contributes meaningfully to societal, organisational and economic challenges.

### Initiatives

#### 4.1. Build sufficient capacity around strategic research themes

Expand research capacity around strategic research themes by regrouping faculty into focused research centres and expanding the recruitment and involvement of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers in priority areas. The strategic priority areas include the evolving dynamics of people and organisations in the age of artificial intelligence; the resilience, growth, and long-term continuity of family enterprises, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and venture creation; and the intersections of policy, economics, and strategic decision-making.

#### 4.2. Establish an entrepreneurship-focused research centre

Create a dedicated centre advancing research in entrepreneurship and innovation, aligned with ISM's strategic priorities and supporting collaboration between researchers, industry partners and the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This centre will strengthen Lithuania's innovation capacity by generating knowledge on venture creation, business growth, and entrepreneurial ecosystems, while helping translate research into practice and partnerships that support a more competitive, resilient, and future-oriented economy.

#### 4.3. Increase research excellence and recognition

Increase support for publications in top-tier



academic journals, faculty participation in international research projects and adoption of innovative research methods, supported by digitalised internal processes. This will be achieved through stronger support for publication development, incentives and administrative assistance for international grant applications and project participation, and greater access to advanced methodological training and research support services.

#### 4.4. Enhance relevance and social impact

Strengthen collaboration with businesses and policymakers for research purposes and support the dissemination of research results through both academic and public-oriented channels, ensuring that ISM's research contributes to evidence-based decision-making and broader societal debates.

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## 5. Strategic direction - Lifelong Learning Ecosystem

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### Objective

ISM seeks to cultivate a lifelong learning ecosystem in which students, alumni and professionals continue to grow long after formal studies are completed. Through flexible learning formats and modular courses, supported by an active learning community that brings together learners, faculty and partners, this ecosystem enables continuous development across different career stages. This ecosystem supports both individual learners and corporate partners by offering various learning pathways for individuals and organisations, to respond to evolving global skill needs, and contributing to wider social impact.

The goal is to ensure that learning at ISM does not end with graduation but continues throughout different career and life stages, supported by modern learning formats, digital tools and faculty who serve as mentors as well as educators.



### Initiatives

#### 5.1. Develop a Microcredential framework and a flexible, stackable learning portfolio

Create a modular learning portfolio in which academic courses, executive education modules,

experiential learning components, and alumni/professional programmes are offered as stackable microcredentials. These microcredentials will provide pathways for our alumni and professionals to update competencies for new roles, industries and digital demands. They can be combined, recognised and accumulated towards formal qualifications within ISM's degree programmes.

#### 5.2. Elevate corporate lifelong learning partnerships

Expand collaboration with companies and public sector organisations through the co-creation of customised programmes tailored to organisational needs. This will involve strengthening and further developing the existing executive education unit to enhance its capacity to diagnose complex organisational challenges and deliver organisational development solutions.

#### 5.3. Empower faculty as mentors and lifelong learning facilitators

Further develop faculty competencies in mentoring, experiential learning, digital pedagogy to meet the expectations of Gen Z and Alpha generations. Support faculty teaching innovation and continuous skills renewal enabling them to deliver transformative learning experiences across degree programmes, executive education, and microcredential pathways.

#### 5.4. Build a digital lifelong learning infrastructure

Create digital processes that visualise students' and alumni learning journeys and enable clear, transparent pathways for skills development over time. These processes support recognition, progression and participation within ISM's lifelong learning ecosystem and strengthen long-term engagement across different career and life stages.

# ISM 2030: The future we are building

In 2030, ISM stands as a business school recognised for how it educates and leads in times of change. Its focus is clear: delivering high-quality education, acting with responsibility towards society and preparing graduates who are ready to lead with confidence, social consciousness and integrity.

## 1. The Unique ISM Learning Model



ISM is known for its unique method that combines academic depth with real-world relevance. Students work on interdisciplinary, real business challenges using a range of tools – from analytical frameworks and digital solutions to critical thinking.

## 2. Educators Beyond Teaching



ISM educators adapt their role to the context. They teach, guide, support and advise – depending on the needs of the student, the programme and the situation. Their focus is to develop critical thinking and support resilience, ethical judgement, and entrepreneurial mindset.

## 3. An Entrepreneurial Mindset as the Default



Entrepreneurship is embedded across all programmes as a mindset. An entrepreneurial student sees opportunities, takes initiative and learns from challenges. This prepares graduates to act with confidence in changing conditions.

## 4. Research with Tangible Outcomes



ISM brings together faculty and students around key themes through focused research centres. This helps us create critical mass, work more closely with business, and produce research that is relevant to society and creates tangible value.

## 5. Based in Lithuania. Positioned in Europe



ISM strengthens its European recognition and international outlook. Diversity and international perspectives are embedded across all programmes through global case studies and cross-border collaboration.

## 6. Leaders Ready to Act



ISM graduates are known for integrity, critical thinking, adaptability and entrepreneurial mindset. They are trusted leaders who combine ambition with responsibility and create positive impact.