

**Developing a Problem Statement for Ulster’s Civic and Economic Recovery Module**

A **problem statement** is a concise description of the issues (challenges) that need to be addressed by a problem-solving team (our students) and should be presented to them before they try to solve the problem.A good **problem statement** should answer questions such as:

* What is the problem?
* Who has the problem?
* Where does the problem occur?
* When does the problem occur?
* What does the problem impact?

**How will this statement be used?**

Students will be given 4 weeks to develop solutions to the problems presented by organisations, these could be in response to recent economic or civic problems created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A **problem statement** should be:

* **Concise.** The essence of your problem needs to be condensed down to a **single sentence**. A reader of the statement should be able to easily understand the problem.
* **Specific.** The problem statement should focus your thinking, research, and solutions toward a single population or issue.
* **Measurable.** Problems can be measured in terms of degree and frequency. The strongest problem statements incorporate measurable aspects of both the degree and frequency of the problem as it exists.
* **Specify what is Impacted**. The problem statement should identify the population affected by the problem.

**Types of Problems**

There are many types of civic or economic problems that your organisation might be facing, and we want our students to work on problems that best match their subject area and expertise. We will have students from a broad range of discipline areas working in either subject groups or individually to solve these problems. Regardless of subject area we will be encouraging all of our students to think about sustainable solutions to the problems presented, specifically supporting the 2030 UN goals for sustainable development <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>.

Types of problems might include:

* A problem which hinders the efficiency of a company
* An organisational process which needs interventions
* Members of a society facing a specific difficulty
* Members of the workforce facing a specific difficulty

**Discussing the problem with students**

We will accommodate an online introductory session between the organisation and the students working on the problem. This will be facilitated by an academic tutor who will be supporting the students over the 4-week period.

**Providing supporting information/resources**

Organisations can provide additional background information, resources and guides that might help students to better understand the problem or organisation. These should be easily digested and provided in a digital format that can be uploaded to the online module support area for students.

**Presenting Solutions**

Students will be creating and presenting their solutions using a range of digital artefacts including; presentation, report, blog, and Vlog formats. There will be an opportunity for you to attend a virtual dissemination event.

**Time Commitment**

There is no cost to engaging with this module, the anticipated time commitment is:

* Introductory session: one hour
* Mentoring/coaching: one to four hours
* Dissemination event: one hour

**Take the solution to the next level**

We hope that you will be impressed with the solutions presented by our students. There will be an opportunity to recruit some of our students into short- or medium-term placements which would enable them to take forward some of these solutions into live projects in your organisation.