Annabelle Brenes Flores

Department of Management
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS & TRAINING

The London School of Economics and Political Science — London, UK
LSE Fellow, Department of Management — September 2026 – Present

University of Reading — UK
PhD in International Business and Strategy (candidate) — 2022 – Present

Aston University — UK
MSc in International Business, Distinction — 2017 – 2018
FCO Chevening Scholar (full scholarship)

Ave Maria University — Nicaragua
BA in Business Administration, Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.92/4.0) — 2007 – 2011
Class valedictorian; recipient of the Scholastic, Business Department, Finance and Provost Awards

RESEARCH

Doctoral thesis: The Developmental Impact of Special Economic Zones in Latin America

- Uses nighttime light satellite data to measure economic activity and spillover effects across nine Latin American countries.
- Develops a novel methodological framework for economic impact assessment in data-scarce environments, with implications for SEZ governance and FDI strategy.

Research interests: special economic zones and place-based industrial policy; foreign direct investment and local development; spatial spillovers; policy evaluation in emerging economies.

PUBLICATIONS & WORKING PAPERS

Working Papers

Brenes Flores, A., Ibarra-Olivo, E., and Narula, R. "Lights on: The spatial footprint of Special Economic Zones in Central America, Colombia and the Dominican Republic." Working paper.

Brenes Flores, A. "Lights on, results switched off: Evidence from Mexico's fiscal incentives in the northern border." Working paper.

Brenes Flores, A. "From location advantages to policy additionality: An integrated conceptual framework for evaluating Special Economic Zones." Working paper.

Refereed Conference Papers

Brenes Flores, A., Ibarra-Olivo, E., and Narula, R. 2026. "Lights on: The economic impact of Special Economic Zones in Central America, Colombia and the Dominican Republic." Academy of International Business Annual Meeting, Track 10: Emerging Markets and Emerging Market MNEs (competitive session).

Brenes Flores, A. 2025. "The developmental impact of Special Economic Zones in Latin America." Academy of International Business UK & Ireland Chapter Doctoral Colloquium.

TEACHING & SUPERVISION

The London School of Economics and Political Science — London, UK
MG464 International Business Strategy in the World Economy (Postgraduate) — Autumn Term 2026
Course leader; CEMS Master in International Management

MG421 International Business Strategy in the World Economy (Postgraduate) — Winter Term 2027

MG303 International Business Strategy in the World Economy (Undergraduate) — Winter Term 2027

University of Reading UK
Teaching Assistant September 2023 – Present

- MMM0001 International Strategic Management (Postgraduate)
- MM1F19 Management Debates (Undergraduate)
- MM296 Building Competitive Advantage (Undergraduate)
- MMM071 Geographies of Globalisation and the International Business Environment (Postgraduate)

Teaching approach

- Delivered seminars, facilitated case discussions and supported applied learning activities; maintained the course virtual learning environment (Blackboard).
- Assessed assignments and examinations, providing constructive and timely feedback.
- Updated MMM071 lecture content with the latest research findings, enhancing module relevance and student engagement.

POLICY & PRACTITIONER ENGAGEMENT

Research briefing on Special Economic Zone evaluation, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) December 2025

Research briefing, Americas Free Zone Association (AFZA) July 2024

AWARDS & FUNDING

First place, poster competition, University of Reading Doctoral Research Conference 2025

First place, poster competition, Henley Business School Doctoral Conference 2024

FCO Chevening Scholarship (full scholarship), Aston University 2017 – 2018

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

Reviewing

Reviewer, Academy of International Business (AIB) Annual Conference, Manchester 2026

Reviewer, Business Association of Latin American Studies (BALAS) Annual Conference, Economics and Global Issues track 2025

University of Reading UK
International Business and Strategy PhD Representative September 2023 – September 2024
Represented doctoral students on departmental matters. Organised the 2024 Henley Business School Doctoral Conference with staff, leading a team of five departmental representatives.

STaR Mentor September 2024 – September 2025
Provided academic and pastoral support to new postgraduate students during their transition to postgraduate study.

Hall Mentor January 2022 – Present
Supported the hall community of more than 500 residents through weekly events that fostered student well-being.

TEDx Aston University UK
Director October 2017 – August 2018
Led a team of 26 to deliver a TEDx event and secured £5,000 in sponsorship.

PRACTITIONER EXPERIENCE

Banpro Grupo Promerica Nicaragua
Branch Manager June 2011 – August 2017; March 2020 – August 2022

- Led a team of 46 employees at the largest bank branch in Nicaragua.
- Grew the deposit portfolio by 40% over four years to a record US$350 million.
- Conducted market and competitor analysis to support budgeting and strategic planning; oversaw compliance with national laws and international regulations.
- Coached staff and prepared monthly financial reports and presentations for senior management.

American Nicaraguan Foundation Nicaragua
Grant Writer March 2019 – February 2020

- Prepared grant proposals securing US$600,000 in funding.
- Developed project monitoring approaches addressing economic inclusion and gender equality, and researched international practice to inform social projects.

Simworx Ltd UK
Consultant August – December 2018

- Built a global market database for 3D/4D attractions and analysed investment trends to inform business development strategy.

LANGUAGES & SKILLS

Languages: Spanish (fluent), English (fluent), French (basic)

Methods and software: econometrics, spatial data modelling and policy evaluation; R, Stata and QGIS