

# News From the SIOP–United Nations Team: SIOP Has Joined the UN Global Compact and So Can You!

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The mission of SIOP’s United Nations Team is to leverage work-, work-er-, and employment-related theory, research, and practice to help advance the goals of the United Nations and increase I-O psychologists’ potential for global impact. The UN team’s role is to educate, advocate, and make direct contributions to the programs and goals of the United Nations and to connect the work of the United Nations with that of the field of I-O psychology.

As a first initiative, the SIOP UN Team has been exploring ways in which SIOP can more closely align with the UN Global Compact. Launched in 2000, the Global Compact is a strategic policy initiative that provides a framework for companies that endorse sustainability and responsible business practices. The Global Compact is a voluntary initiative that is organized around 10 principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anticorruption (see Table 1). The goal is to “mainstream” these principles around the world, as well as to align businesses with broader UN goals. The SIOP annual conference has featured theme tracks over the past few years that directly align with the goals of the UN Global Compact, including for example corporate social responsibility, workplace discrimination, and environmental sustainability. In addition, many I-O psychologists are already actively engaged in activities that support this initiative (e.g., Berry, Reichman, & Schein, 2008; Berry, Reichman, Klobas, MacLachlan, Hui, & Carr, 2011; Carr, 2010; Carr, MacLachlan & Furnham, 2012; Frese, Brantjes, & Hoorn, 2002; Leftkowitz, 2008; Olson-Buchanan, Koppes Bryan & Thompson, 2013; Schein, 2003; Scott, 2012).

Both business and nonbusiness entities can join the UN Global Compact. Nonbusiness entities include academic institutions, business associations (like SIOP), cities, civil society organizations, labor organizations, and public-sector organizations. Each category of membership has its own framework, and in this article we will focus on corporate and academic participation only, in that they encompass the majority of SIOP member employers. Details about membership can be found on the UN Global Compact website: [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org).

Table 1  
*The UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles*

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#### Human rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Table 1 (continued)

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Labor

- Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor;
- Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labor; and
- Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anticorruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.
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### **Corporate Participation**

Corporate participation in the Global Compact involves a commitment to the implementation, disclosure, and promotion of the 10 principles. A company joining the initiative is expected to:

- Make the Global Compact and its principles an integral part of business strategy, day-to-day operations, and organizational culture
- Incorporate the Global Compact and its principles in the decision-making processes of the highest-level governance body (e.g., the board of directors)
- Contribute to broad development objectives (including the Millennium Development Goals) through partnerships
- Integrate in its annual report (or in a similar public document, such as a sustainability report) a description of the ways in which it implements the principles and supports broader development objectives (also known as the Communication on Progress)
- Advance the Global Compact and the case for responsible business practices through advocacy and active outreach to peers, partners, clients, consumers, and the public at large.

### **Academic Participation**

University participation involves a similar commitment to the 10 principles in their operations but may also involve integrating the Global Compact principles into course curricula and supporting applied research and thought leadership in relation to the 10 principles. There also exists a special program—Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)—for business schools and management-related academic units providing an engagement framework to advance corporate responsibility through the incorporation of six universal principles into curricula and research (see Table 2). These principles have been developed by an international task force of 60 deans, university presidents, and

official representatives of leading business schools and follow from a recommendation of all academic stakeholders of the Global Compact. The PRME initiative is governed jointly by the Global Compact Office and other members of the PRME Steering Committee, such AACSB and other such bodies worldwide.

Table 2

*The Principles for Responsible Management Education*

- Principle 1 | Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.
- Principle 2 | Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.
- Principle 3 | Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.
- Principle 4 | Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.
- Principle 5 | Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.
- Principle 6 | Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

**Benefits of Participation**

Benefits of Global Compact/PRME membership include being viewed as a leader of social change surrounding corporate citizenship and sustainability. Likewise, academic institutions are able to stay “ahead of the curve” by adopting an internationally recognized framework for adaptation and change. Further, a new generation of students and consumers are making demands with regard to sustainability and prosocial corporate leadership. Businesses and universities operating according to these principles will not only contribute to positive social change but also gain competitive advantage by virtue of meeting the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholder groups. In sum, these initiatives will increasingly enhance responsible performance, adaptation to changing demands, and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

**SIOP’s Current and Future Roles**

As a starting point in this campaign, we are happy to report that SIOP painlessly went through the application process and has been accepted as an official member of the UN Global Compact (Scott, 2011)! By joining the Global Compact, SIOP’s UN Team has committed to organizing initiatives that will attract new participants through outreach and awareness raising; organizing learning events, workshops, and training for members on the topic

of corporate citizenship; and functioning as a platform for the sharing of experiences and ideas for research and advocacy around human rights, labor, environmental sustainability, and anticorruption in organizations.

As its first initiative as a Global Compact member, our team will be developing a toolkit and support structure for assisting SIOP members in approaching their organizations and universities about joining the Global Compact. We will also be collecting data on members' employers who are already participating in Global Compact efforts with the goal of setting up a network for broadening participation and identifying unique ways in which the field of I-O psychology can contribute to positive social change related to worker rights and the social responsibility of organizations.

What can you do? Get involved!

If your employer is already a member of the Global Compact, please let us know by sending an e-mail to Ishbel McWha ([ishbel@mcwha.org](mailto:ishbel@mcwha.org))

Talk to your organization's decision makers about joining the UN Global Compact and signing on to the 10 Principles. Joining is easy, and is done through the Global Compact website: [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org).

If you are in a university environment, you can approach your dean or department head about signing on to the Principles for Responsible Management Education. More information about PRME can be found here: [www.unprme.org](http://www.unprme.org).

Please consider the SIOP UN Team as a support network in communicating with your employer (contact any of us at any time), and be on the lookout for our upcoming toolkits and support documents.

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