

ACCA's role in creating public value: our UN Global Compact Communication on Engagement for the 24 months ended 30 September 2019

Chief executive's statement

ACCA's commitment to delivering public value lies at the heart of everything we do. We define this commitment across three dimensions – acting in the public interest, promoting ethical business, and supporting economic growth.

It's by educating our 219,000 members and 527,000 students across 179 countries to embrace responsible and sustainable business practices that we make our most significant contribution to the UN Global Compact's ten principles. This Communication on Engagement sets out how this has been delivered over the past 24 months.

In addition to the on-going development of the ACCA Qualification, our series of Professional Insights explores the most relevant and urgent issues for the accountancy profession and business more widely. Our Communication on Engagement sets out our progress in these areas in particular since October 2017.

Through this latest Communication on Engagement, I am pleased to confirm that ACCA supports the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our intent to continue to advance these principles within our sphere of influence and make a clear statement of this commitment to our stakeholders and the public.

We also pledge to take part in the activities of the UN Global Compact, where appropriate and feasible, such as participation in country and local initiatives, involvement in specialised initiatives and workstreams, engagement in partnership projects, and reviewing and providing commentary to participating companies on their Communications on Progress.



Helen Brand

22 October 2019

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Foreword

The Communication on Engagement which follows outlines the key ways in which ACCA has contributed to upholding and promoting the ten principles set out in the UN Global Compact between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2019.

We've detailed the main activities and initiatives undertaken in respect of each of the ten principles. In doing so, we hope that we're showing ACCA's on-going commitment to being a force for good in the global accountancy profession.

If you have queries about our work in respect of the ten principles, please contact Helen Perkins, strategic communications adviser to ACCA's chief executive at: helen.perkins@accaglobal.com

22 October 2019

HUMAN RIGHTS

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

Principle 2: Business should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Key ACCA initiatives/deliverables and their impact	Where to find out more
<p>For members and other stakeholders, our Professional Insights (PI) report, <i>Social and environmental value creation</i>, produced with the CFA Institute and published in September 2019, examines the role of the professional accountant across these dimensions.</p> <p>The report summarises five disclosure and decision-making tools and frameworks to help create social and environmental value (climate risk reporting; natural capital; circular business model innovation; social impact and the SDGs; and purpose-led strategies) and outlines how professional accountants and their teams can meet the challenges ahead in these areas through skills development.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/Social_and_environmental_value_creation.html</p>
<p>For members and other stakeholders, our PI report, <i>Purpose and the profession</i>, published in January 2018, looks at the role the profession plays in promoting equality of access to professional accountancy careers globally and what more can and should be done to address social mobility.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/purpose-and-the-profession.html</p>
<p>Within ACCA, as an employer, we are signatory to this UN Global Compact and reflect its principles in how we operate.</p> <p>We have mapped our Strategy to 2020 to the UN SDGs it supports and detail this in our integrated report for the year ended 31 March 2019.</p>	<p>https://annualreport.accaglobal.com/value-creation-model</p>

For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>The Sustainable Development Goals: redefining context, risk and opportunity</i> , published in November 2017, explores the central role professional accountants play in delivering the SDGs.	https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/the-sustainable-development-goals.html
LABOUR 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 labour Principle 5: The effective abolition of child labour Principle 6: The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation	
Key ACCA initiatives/deliverables and their impact	Where to find out more
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<p>Within ACCA, as an employer, we are signatory to this UN Global Compact and reflect its principles in how we operate.</p> <p>We have mapped our Strategy to 2020 to the UN SDGs it supports and detail this in our integrated report for the year ended 31 March 2019.</p>	https://annualreport.accaglobal.com/value-creation-model
Within ACCA, as an employer, we work with our union, UNITE, to agree pay and policies for all our employees across the UK and Ireland.	
Within ACCA, as an employer, we have voluntarily undertaken to report our gender pay gap in the UK since 2018 and place our commitment to reducing any disparity on record.	https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/about-us/annual-reports.html
Within ACCA, as an employer, we have an equal opportunities policy which all employees agree to uphold.	

ENVIRONMENT

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 9: Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

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<p>For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>Insights into integrated reporting 3.0</i>, published in May 2019, explores the theme of balance and authenticity in integrated reporting. It presents good practice ideas and excerpts from ten integrated reports which have demonstrated authenticity in different ways.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/professional-insights/global-profession/insights-into-integrated-reporting-3.html</p>
<p>For members and other stakeholders, our PI report, <i>Tax as a force for good</i>, published in December 2018, highlights how financial incentives could be better used to enable inclusive and circular growth.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/environmental-tax.html</p>

<p>For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>The Sustainable Development Goals: redefining context, risk and opportunity</i>, published in November 2017, explores the central role professional accountants play in delivering the SDGs.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/the-sustainable-development-goals.html</p>
<p>ACCA's own environmental impact</p> <p>As a digitally-enabled organisation, we have progressively reduced our reliance on paper processes, not least in moving to entirely digital examining for our first nine exams. The final phase of this will commence in March 2020, when the Strategic Professional exams will be progressively moved to digital examining.</p> <p>Within ACCA, as an employer, we are working to formalise our own environmental sustainability programme to reduce our operational impact.</p> <p>A steering group is being formed to ensure effective internal consultation and engagement and our existing Environmental Sustainability Group will continue to meet in order to champion local initiatives across all our markets.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/vn/en/student/exam-entry-and-administration/computer-based-exams/strategic-professional-cbes.html</p>

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

Key ACCA initiatives/deliverables and their impact	Where to find out more
<p><i>Ethics and Professional Skills Module (EPSM)</i> As part of our ACCA Qualification advances, we refreshed and extended our EPSM, which is a stand-alone module that must be completed to achieve ACCA membership.</p> <p>Designed to embed the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviours, it requires students to apply these attributes to real-world situations. We continually evolve the content to ensure it meets the demands of the market. In April 2019, we introduced a new data analytics unit which includes ethical considerations such as transparency, privacy and confidentiality when managing and handling data.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/qualifications/why-acca/competency-framework/acca-qualification/ethics.html</p>
<p>Code of Ethics and Conduct All students and members commit to an ACCA Code of Ethics and Conduct; this Code is also binding on any partner or director in an ACCA practising firm. It encompasses five fundamental principles: integrity; objectivity; professional competence and due care; confidentiality; and professional behaviour.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/about-us/regulation/ethics/acca-code-of-ethics-and-conduct.html</p>
<p>For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>Audit quality in a multidisciplinary firm</i>, produced in partnership with IFAC and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ), was published in September 2019 and explores how the quality of audit can be improved through a multi-disciplinary approach.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/expectation-gap/Audit-quality-in-a-multidisciplinary-firm.html</p>

For members and other stakeholders, our PI report, <i>Closing the expectation gap in audit</i> , published in March 2019, explored public attitudes to audits and by analysing three elements of the expectation gap – the knowledge gap, the performance gap and the evolution – suggested how it can be bridged for the benefit of the profession and the public.	https://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/professional-insights/global-profession/expectation-gap.html
For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>G20 public trust in tax: Surveying public trust in the G20 tax system</i> was produced in January 2019. This research, undertaken and published jointly with IFAC and CA ANZ, is based on feedback from 8,400 members of the public on the fairness and sustainability of G20 tax systems.	https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/g20-tax.html
Within ACCA, as an employer, we have an anti-bribery policy and all employees are required to complete online training on compliance with anti-bribery legislation when they join ACCA.	
Within ACCA, as an employer, we have an agreed tax strategy which we publish on our website. This sets out the principles we apply to our tax strategy, including recognising the importance of the tax that we pay to the social and economic development of the countries in which we operate.	https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/about-us/annual-reports/tax-strategy.html
For members and other stakeholders, our PI report <i>The Sustainable Development Goals: redefining context, risk and opportunity</i> , published in November 2017, explores the central role professional accountants play in delivering the SDGs.	https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/professional-insights/global-profession/the-sustainable-development-goals.html

<p>In October 2017 and October 2018, ACCA marked Global Ethics Day with a series of events shining a spotlight on ethical behaviour. This included video interviews with business leaders on their approach to ethics, produced with Carnegie Council and CFA Institute.</p>	
<p>In September 2019, ACCA focused on a quarterly theme of the <i>Power of Ethics</i> in all its activities. This included special events around the world to showcase ACCA's and our members' contribution to ethical behaviour.</p>	<p>https://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/cam/power-of-ethics.html</p>
<p>Our <i>Accounting for the Future</i> online virtual conference ran for three days in November 2017 and December 2018. Open to members and other stakeholders free of charge, sessions included a focus on ethics (2017 and 2018), public trust in tax (2017 and 2018), integrated reporting (2017), social mobility (2017) and business models of the future (2018).</p> <p>The 2017 event attracted 23,808 attendees from 177 countries. The 2018 conference was attended by 20,644 from 170 countries.</p>	