

UN Global Compact Communication on Progress

October 2019

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Letter of support for the UN Global Compact



Manchester, October 2019

The Global Compact is the largest and most important worldwide alliance for responsible business management. The commitment to conduct business responsibly in alignment with the ten principles is of great significance in progressing the enactment of human rights, the realisation of international workers' standards, environmental protection and the prevention of corruption.

As an SME, AlphaPlus signed up to the Global Compact in November 2018.

Our business involves contact with many national and international customers and suppliers. In addition, our core team is a tightly knit group with close connections to our associates. We therefore find the commitments to labour particularly meaningful. The environment is also a key concern for our employees and the Board and we actively promote initiatives in this area. We have tried to communicate the principles of the Global Compact and our responses not only to our employees but also to our partners in all areas of work.

The adoption of the principles also aligns with sustainable business practices. As a company, we take a holistic view of the success of the company. An enterprise can only be profitable in the long term when it considers social and environmental factors alongside those of profit.

In this first year of our engagement, we have considered the guidelines in detail and have identified areas where we are already in line. The workforce of AlphaPlus supports the principles of the Global Compact wholeheartedly and will continue to strengthen its commitment to achieving the goals, embedding them in our daily business practice.

Our first annual report will outline how the principles are already supported and the results stemming from these. We will then aim to build on this base in future years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kerr'.

John Kerr

Chairman of the Board

AlphaPlus' profile

AlphaPlus is an education consultancy that specialises in the design, development and deployment of qualifications and their underpinning assessment, and in the evaluation of their performance and impact.


AlphaPlus helps organisations make their educational assessments better. Many organisations use assessments – academic examinations, portfolio assessments of skills, observational workplace assessments for professionals. In all cases, good assessments make sure that people get the outcome they deserve: the right people pass and fail; the grades awarded are fair; the results are honest, reliable and defensible, and reflect the attributes that stakeholders value.

We work with our customers across many types of education (school, college, vocational and professional education) both in the UK and internationally. Sometimes our work starts with helping people to write better tests and questions. At other times it involves undertaking statistical analysis of assessments to check they are fair, or reviewing the way assessments are run to check that they are consistent. We've all done exams where we felt we didn't get a fair chance to shine – at AlphaPlus we work with the people who run these assessments to help give everyone a fair chance.

Assessment theory (the academic discipline that explores how assessments work) is a highly technical area, which a small number of universities around the world specialise in. Our approach is relatively unusual in that we combine the best that academic theory has to offer with the outcomes-focused approach that modern assessment businesses need – taking account of the practical requirements in everyday life that can make academic theory difficult to apply in an unmodified form.

ABOUT ALPHAPLUS

<p>£17.5 Million Largest Project (approximately)</p>	<p>6 Directors</p>
<p>15 Years in business</p>	<p>25+ Core team</p>
<p>300+ Projects in 20 Countries</p>	<p>350+ Associates</p>



AlphaPlus is a well-established, substantial and trusted consultancy organisation providing research, design, development and delivery services for qualifications, certification, assessment and related educational matters to customers in the UK and overseas.

AlphaPlus is responsive to customer need, adaptable and profitable, combining the best of commercial and educational sectors. We have a deserved reputation for high levels of educational expertise and for conducting our work with ethics and integrity. AlphaPlus uses progressive working methods: we are collaborative and innovative; bringing useful solutions to our customers. We bring best-in-class teams together and compete on quality rather than cost.

Our processes are well-founded, robust and resilient. Our whole team are skilled, big enough to deliver on large delivery projects, and there are no single points of failure in teams or processes. Our team is stable and sustainable, including through changes in key personnel.

Our potential and current customers trust us on national and international high-stakes delivery projects, and we are able to deliver these projects without overstretching. We are careful about what we commit to and then we work hard to keep our promises. Our customers depend on our high-quality delivery.

Results and Measures

The following measures and results are those which are currently carried out as a part of our wider company policies and ethos. These align with the ten principles of the Global Compact and we will seek to further expand these particularly in the areas of Labour and Environment.

Human Rights



The company has policies that are regularly reviewed at Board level which cover all areas of working including an anti slavery statement. In general, we work only with clients and suppliers where we have a personal relationship and are confident in their business practices.



The board considers every new contract both at home and, particularly, abroad in the light of human rights or ethical issues that may arise during the fulfilment of any such work. They reserve the right not to proceed should any concerns or conflicts become apparent.



We work with a range of associates. Our onboarding processes include the taking up of references and the review of CVs so that we ensure that they are committed to the ethos and principles of our business.

Labour



Women are represented at all levels of the business, including board and senior management levels. They make up 41% of the workforce at current levels.



We practise equal opportunities recruitment, including the guaranteed interview scheme for people with disabilities.



Appraisals are carried out annually. These are constructive in nature and aim to develop all staff, professionally, educationally and emotionally. Board appraisals are informed by 360 degree reviews conducted by an independent company.



Training needs are identified as part of the annual appraisal. All requests are considered and a budget is put in place to support training requirements. These are tailored to the professional needs of the staff.



The company has supported four apprentices, three of whom are still with the company in more senior roles. Two are being funded through part time university degrees by the company.



Flexible working is available to all staff with a range of start times between 7.30am and 9am. Working hours can be adjusted through the week at the employee's discretion to enable personal or family commitments to be fulfilled. Staff can also arrange to work from home if necessary. This ability to juggle family commitments, whether they relate to children, parents or other needs leads to improved mental health and lower stress levels as well as low levels of absenteeism within the workplace.



There is a strong company ethos that encourages the use of vacation time. Overtime is monitored quarterly and, in general, should be taken as time off in lieu (TOIL) rather than being paid out. Workload is also monitored monthly and mechanisms are in place to support staff where workload builds up.



The company holds regular seminars for all staff where different areas of the business are explained in a way that is accessible for all. This also includes administrative areas. This promotes inclusivity and a feeling of ownership of the business amongst all staff.



Ergonomics: staff physical wellbeing is supported through ergonomic working practices. There is use of standing desks, where requested, and a variety of measures are used to support staff who work at computers all day, such as lumbar supports, monitor stands etc.

Environment



Company policy is based on the principles of reduce/ reuse/ recycle. There is a deliberate decision on whether to use resources. Once that is taken, reusable resources are used where possible, eg, all crockery in the office is non-disposable. Finally, non-reusable items are recycled where possible.



The office is deliberately based in an area of Manchester with links to a wide range of public transport hubs and networks. There are cycle racks outside the front door. The toilet facilities also include a shower so that staff can shower if they run or cycle to work. Staff are encouraged to use rail travel rather than their cars for business purposes wherever possible.



There is an extensive range of recycling initiatives in the office, including paper, batteries, printer cartridges and plastic. Suggestions are welcomed from staff for further initiatives and, where possible, these are acted on. Cloth tea towels and dishcloths are used in preference to paper.



The lights in the office are controlled by a master switch by the front door. This means that the last person to leave can easily turn off every light in the building without risk of forgetting one.



Kitchen and dining facilities are provided for staff, including a fridge where food brought from home can be stored. Fresh, filtered drinking water is always available as well as tea, coffee and milk. There is an office culture of sitting round the kitchen table to eat at lunchtime, rather than at one's desk which has been shown to improve health. It also fosters social inclusion amongst the staff.

Anti-corruption



The ethos of the company is one of openness and disclosure. The company has policies on anti-corruption and bribery, which are communicated to staff. Registers of connected parties and interests are kept and are reviewed monthly at each board meeting.



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