

UNGC Communication on Engagement

The Oasis School of Human Relations inspires and develops 21st century relationships for meaningful, responsible and sustainable action. We place relationship at the heart of our work, and developing the whole person as being at the core of transformative change in the world.

We operate on a not-for-profit basis out of the legal form of a company limited by guarantee. The not-for-profit status is clearly defined through our financial ethics. Our ethics are based on our values, principles and the concept of the peer principle, which encompasses individual and mutual responsibility. These ethics are outlined in our Statement of Ethics which was reviewed, amended and expanded during 2020.

As a signatory to the UN Global Compact and a founding partner of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative we are conscious of our place in the world and our impact upon it.

We continue to support the Global Compact and are committed to the initiative and its principles.

Guiding Principles

Ethical approaches to people and communities are at the core of what we do. Our specific approach to the environment and Planet is set out in our Statement of Ethics (see appendix):

- We are committed to discovering what is possible to do more of whilst using less
- We are committed to acting with consciousness and staying awake to the consequences of our actions on our planet
- We seek to live within our resources and to act as stewards of our environment and the planet.
- We engage with our suppliers and customers to encourage alignment with the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in Practice

Everything we do reflects our values towards people. Much of what we do also has an explicit relationship to what we call Globally Responsible Practice. For example:

- We were a founding member of the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative and continue to be actively involved with the life of GRLI, looking for ways to develop our influence and reach.
- We continue to introduce new partners to the work of GRLI and the UNGC
- We have designed and continue to deliver modules on Globally Responsible Practice within academic institutions, most notably at NIT in Germany, and at The University of Leeds in the UK
- We continue to work with a range of our partners on bringing more social and environmental purpose to their work, for example at Bettys and Taylors Group and in NorthStar Housing Group

- We have twice run a wide-ranging research programme into the nature of the Workplace of Tomorrow if people and planet really mattered, and continue to disseminate the outcomes of this research. We plan to engage in further research into this in later 2021/22, as our intention to do so in 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We include the principles of our Workplace of Tomorrow Research in our on-going work with clients and introduce it to new clients, stimulating discussion and action for sustainable change.

In these ways we have worked to ensure our ethics and principles live out in the work we do in the wider world. We have also brought this approach into the everyday life of Oasis. This has been based on the fundamental principle of developing and sustaining a strong commitment to acting out of individual consciousness. As a result, we also:

1. Continue to bank ethically by using Triodos Bank
2. Invest ethically with Triodos and Shared Interest Society
3. Buy ethical supplies including teas, coffees, paper supplies etc.
4. Ensure we regularly review contracts with suppliers of electricity and gas to ensure we have the best 'Green' energy supplies available
5. Purchase certified tea and coffee supplies through Bettys and Taylors Group
6. Use recycled paper products
7. Increasingly recycle waste from products used within the Oasis Centre.
8. Discuss the Global Compact principles in annual gatherings of Staff and Directors to review progress on the measures we are undertaking and to plan further commitments for the coming year alongside ad hoc conversations.
9. Included this statement in the Staff Handbook and ensured it is covered as part of staff induction.

We have also sustained our commitment to:

1. Using a local waste processing supplier which has implemented a zero waste to landfill policy
2. Increased use of on-line technologies including Zoom and the use of Dropbox as an alternative to printed course materials; continuing to look for the most effective ways of reducing our ecological footprint, especially so in 2020 where much of our work moved to virtual platforms.
3. In 2021/22 we intend to maintain a minimum of 40% of our work on online platforms, reducing travel and associated carbon footprint of this.
4. Continuing dialogue with our food supplier regarding local sourcing
5. Purchasing organic produce and reducing the number of meat-based products served at our Centre

Together these actions provide a firm foundation for our ethical approach both in the work we do in the wider world and the decisions we make in running our centre.

The Directors Group
The Oasis School of Human Relations
March 2021

APPENDIX: STATEMENT OF ETHICS

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

Introduction

The Oasis School of Human Relations inspires and develops 21st century relationships for meaningful, responsible and sustainable action. We place relationship at the heart of our work, and developing the whole person as being at the core of transformative change in the world. Oasis is an exciting and unfolding 30-year experiment in the practice of freedom and responsibility. We work with emergent human concerns and questions at all levels of society, integrating theory, experience and practice.

We operate on a **not-for-profit** basis out of the legal form of a company limited by guarantee. Our ethics are based on our values, principles and the concept of the peer principle, and our hopes for the kind of world we want to shape and influence. The following is our latest statement of ethics, accompanied by illustrations in practice.

Our Work

- a. We seek to work with individuals and organisations whose interests and commitments are aligned with public purpose, global responsibility, social justice and social change, rather than exclusively related to financial reward.
- b. We provide services and relationship for individuals who want to attend to their own development and wellbeing.
- c. Whenever possible we work with those committed to developing and applying peer based, inclusive, collaborative, creative, whole person and radical human relations approaches, including working with the 'Transpersonal'.
- d. We make explicit our areas of focus and strive to determine and progress them with the engagement of the wider Oasis community through free association and distributed and shared leadership.
- e. We are committed to supporting the on-going development of those who have participated and engaged in the work and community of Oasis.

Illustrations in practice:

- *In 2020, 30% of the work of the school was with individuals or organisations in the not-for-profit sector, 70% of our work was with public purpose organisations – with commitments to support aspects of social, environmental or wider economic benefit – such organisations include government and responsible businesses including Family Businesses looking to develop their internal relationships and future thinking for sustainable futures.*

- *Oasis supports and maintains a learning network and community events for those who have developed as human relations and Whole Person Learning practitioners.*

Our Practice

- a. We place the needs and requirements of the learner at the heart of our practice.
- b. We offer confidentiality, integrity, autonomy of practice, freedom, and a duty of care to those we work with.
- c. We work through and out of authentic (truthful, intentional, committed and peer based) relationship.
- d. We embrace development, change and uncertainty, and shape meaningful action.
- e. Practitioners apply self and peer-based approaches to ensure reflection, learning, and improving practice, as well as determining ways of working that manifest our guiding principles and the values of whole person learning.
- f. We strive to develop beyond what is known.
- g. We bring developmental perspectives in understanding and working with individuals, teams, groups, organisations and communities.
- h. We ensure we remain independent and not affiliated to any political or religious organisation.
- i. We affirm difference, and challenge traditional forms of hierarchy, power and authority.

Illustrations in practice

- *All directors, staff and core associates undertake annual self and peer assessment processes.*
- *Our longer-term programmes are participative, experiential and are designed to engender collaborative and responsible decision making.*
- *Our frameworks and methodologies have a basis in humanistic psychology, postmodern and inquiry approaches.*
- *We publish our findings and emergent frameworks for wider dissemination through Oasis Press.*

Staff and Practitioner Development

- a. We support the on-going development, health and well-being of individuals and teams (which we term Whole Person Working) employed by Oasis.
- b. We engage in an on-going process of learning, applying to ourselves the practice and rigour we offer others.

Illustrations in practice:

- Access to One-to-one development for all staff from independent practitioners.
- All staff have access to Peoplecare Services and Occupational Health Assessments.
- Regular Peer Organisation Meetings where Staff and Directors together discuss and attend to issues and questions arising from our peer working environment.
- Low turnover and high retention give an indication of staff satisfaction.
- Established Communities of Practice Groups (COPS) – One to One & Organisational Consultancy – with our practitioners to reflect, review, share and deepen our learning and engagement with our work in the world - in addition to on-going support and supervision arrangements and our annual 2 days Practitioner Engagement Events. Throughout 2020 we launched and embedded monthly on-line engagement with our whole community of practice (Oasis Practitioner Community) and intend to continue with on line forms of meetings and engagement.

Environment and Planet

- a. We are committed to discovering what is possible to do more of whilst using less.
- b. We are committed to acting with consciousness and staying awake to the consequences of our actions on our planet.
- c. We seek to live within our resources and to act as stewards of our environment and the planet.
- d. We are mindful of the origin of the resources and energy we consume and the destination of the waste we produce.
- e. We engage with our suppliers and customers to encourage alignment with the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in practice:

- *We design and deliver globally responsible practice programmes in partnership with business schools and universities.*
- *We use local suppliers wherever we can and encourage them to uphold the same environmental and ethical standards.*
- *We pay attention to reducing our environmental footprint – making a positive difference.*
- *In 2021 we are supporting (through the Oasis Foundation) the production and dissemination of a new publication – Unimaginable Futures – which outlines the current risk to our planet in the climate emergency. There is a call to action and practical steps to engage with local communities.*

Illustrations in practice:

We design and deliver globally responsible practice programmes in partnership with business schools and universities.

Financial

Any surplus is re-invested into the organisation.

- a. Directors have parity of salary and do not receive bonuses.
- b. There is an employee pay ratio of no greater than 1:5.5.
- c. All salaries are above the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Living Wage.
- d. We donate between £1,000 and £5,000 annually to the Oasis Foundation.
- e. We are committed to supporting organisations and people, who have an intent to develop whole person approaches, where there may be limited or scarce resources.
- f. We are committed to ethical investment of any available reserves, as well as ethical banking.
- g. We are financially independent.

Illustrations in practice:

- *We have ethical investments with Shared Interest.*
- *Since its inception in 1999 we have contributed over £90,000 to the work of the Oasis Foundation.*
- *We invested £200,000 of our reserves in the purchase of our Centre in 2015, securing a 10-year mortgage with Triodos Bank, which we were able to pay off in full in 2020. We aim to rebuild our reserves to one third of our annual turnover by 2023*
- *We bank with Triodos.*

Governance

- a. The work of the organisation and the directorate is founded on the application of Whole Person Learning philosophy and the peer principle.
- b. The Directors Group is open to any individual capable of sharing in overall organisational responsibilities, able to hold a full organisational role, and aligned to the values and beliefs of Oasis in practice. Joining decisions are made with the individual and the Directors Group.
- c. All decision-making is based on consensus and transparency.
- d. We are committed to implementing, engaging with, and modelling globally responsible practice as recognised through our founding partnership with the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative and our support of the UN Global Compact.

Illustrations in practice

- *Annually, the Directors Group invests the equivalent of a month together in reflection, review, learning, development and decision-making.*
- *Since 1993, the Directors Group of Oasis has varied in number from two to six and currently has 3 Directors with external mentors and guides supporting and challenging our thinking and practice.*
- *Oasis is a signatory of the ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact.*

Conclusion

This Statement provides the parameters within which our judgments are made. Our ethics give an indicator of the kind of world we are aiming to shape. However, it cannot, and does not aim to provide the answer to every ethical dilemma we as practitioners may face, nor be a form of rules that others have to commit to. We will from time to time review the statement, and incorporate our emergent learning and guiding principles. We expect those who work with us to develop their own statement of ethics as self-managing practitioners and colleagues in free association.

If you have a question about the Statement and our ethics, we look forward to hearing from you. This statement was written by the Directors Group. Thanks are due to all the current staff, associates and core associates of the Oasis School who have contributed to our thinking, with particular thanks to our organisational partners and mentors who have given generously of their time and support.

The Directors Group
The Oasis School of Human Relations
Revised 2021