



University of Essex

UN Global Compact:

Communication on Engagement

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Period of Coverage

From academic year beginning in July 2020 and ending in October 2022

Statement of Continued Support by the Vice Chancellor

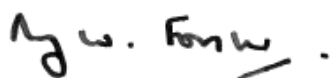
The University of Essex reaffirms its commitment to sustainability, to responsible business practices, and to participating in the United Nations Global Compact. In addition to participating as a successful international business, as an academic institution we can contribute through our research and educational resources, through helping to increase understanding and awareness of responsible citizenship, and contributing towards shaping the business leaders of the future.

We are committed to embracing, supporting and enacting within our sphere of influence the UN Global Compact Principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption:

1. To support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights;
2. To ensure that our business is not complicit in human rights abuses;
3. To uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining;
4. To support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
5. To support the effective abolition of child labour;
6. To support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation;
7. To support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. To undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;
9. To encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies;
10. To work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

In taking part in the programme, we are committed to continuing to align our operations and strategies with the Principles of the Global Compact programme.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that we have taken during the academic year beginning October 2020 to the academic year ending July 2022 to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.



Professor Anthony Forster
Vice-Chancellor
University of Essex

Description of Actions

Human Rights

- The University of Essex is one of the most international universities in the world, with close to 140 countries represented in our student community, and we attract leading academics from around the world. But the diversity of our community is more than where our staff and students come from. More than 1,000 of our staff and students identify as LGBT+, more than 1,300 have declared a disability, and many members of our community follow a religion or belief.
- The University of Essex's Human Rights Centre celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. In the decades since its founding, the Centre has seen more than 3000 students complete their human rights studies, sent staff members to prominent positions in the United Nations and other international and regional human rights institutions, produced numerous high impact human rights projects, and been recognized by significant figures in the world of human rights, including Nelson Mandela, who visited the University in July 1997.
- The University of Essex's Human Rights Centre co-established an Interdisciplinary Human Rights PhD Triangle with the University of Cambridge and the London School of Economics over 10 years ago. This allows for an exchange of information and for doctoral students to present their work on human rights issues. This Triangle has now been expanded with the Norwegian Center for Human Rights, based at the University of Oslo and the Irish Center for Human Rights, at the National University of Ireland (Galway).
- The Director of Liberty, Martha Spurrier, delivered the Human Rights Centre Annual Lecture in 2022 entitled 'A Utopian Vision for Rights in a Dystopian World.'
- The University of Essex continues to mark special occasions such as Holocaust Memorial Week and International Human Rights Day with a series of events, talks, and activities to uphold continued remembrance and engagement.
- The University of Essex Armed Conflict and Crisis Hub produced several papers authored by Dr Claire Simmons with assistance from other members of staff: Displacement in Armed Conflict and the Protection of Civilians; Environmental Harm from Military Operations and the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict; Investigations into Civilian Harm in Armed Conflict; Amends and Reparations for Civilian Harm in Armed Conflict.
- Dr Julie Hannah helped to produce the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy, which was this year recommended by the OHCHR as part of the UN joint action plan to improve the human rights situation in the Philippines.
- Professor Ahmed Shaheed concluded his very successful mandate as UN special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief in October 2022.
- Dr Matthew Gillett (University of Essex Law School) was appointed as a member of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.
- Dr Aoife Duffy (University of Essex Law School) was appointed to the International Expert Panel: State Impunity and the Northern Ireland Conflict
- Professor Geoff Gilbert (University of Essex Law School) was appointed to a research team that wrote the report 'Joint Evaluation of the Protection of Rights of Refugees

during the COVID-19 pandemic', produced under the auspices of the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition.

Labour

- The University of Essex has a policy on modern slavery and human trafficking. This policy was last reviewed in August 2022 and is annually reviewed. The University of Essex is committed to the protection and respect of human rights and takes a clear and concrete approach to combat the use of modern slavery and human trafficking in the university and its supply chain. The University ensures all reasonable steps are taken through procurement procedures and financial procedures that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. The University also ensures that employment procedures are compliant with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The University takes the following steps to address risk of modern slavery:
 - Identify and address risks in the supply chain through procurement procedures and assessments of suppliers' controls of assurances that modern slavery does not take place in the supply chain.
 - Right to work checks are undertaken for everyone who works directly for the university
 - If modern slavery is found, then action can be taken which includes termination of contracts.
 - Raise awareness of modern slavery across the university
- There are a number of policies in place to ensure non-discrimination amongst our labour force and in hiring:
 - Our Essential Training Policy (published in 2017) requires all employees, regardless of role or responsibility (including graduate teaching roles) to complete Equality and Diversity Essentials training. All reporting managers must also complete Managing Diversity training and Recruitment and Selection training. All Chairs of recruitment panels and members of University committees must complete Unconscious Bias training.
 - Our Resourcing Guidance (published in 2017) sets out our principles for recruitment and selection: inclusivity, values-based, fairness, and consistency. We integrate these principles in a number of ways including: using positive action statements to seek to address imbalances in our workforce; ensuring recruitment literature is appealing to people with as wide a range of backgrounds, cultures, skills, and experiences as possible, identifying candidates whose individual values and behaviours align with those of the University; ensure selection panels are as diverse as possible in their composition.
 - Our policy on Harassment and Bullying sets out a zero tolerance approach, and describes the behaviours that are expected from all members of the community, as well as what is not acceptable. In order to combat harassment and bullying, the University has appointed and trained a network of Harassment Support Workers who can receive complaints, offer advice, and take follow-up actions via the Harassment Report and Support Service.
- The University of Essex has a whistleblowing Policy that allows employees to raise issues of concern directly with the Registrar and Secretary. Alternatively, the employee can also

raise issues with the Treasures (who is the chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.)

Environment

- In October 2019 the University switched its electricity contract to a provider that produces 100% renewable energy. This covers all three Essex campuses and supports the University's efforts to continually reduce its carbon emissions.
- The Essex Business School building includes smart technology intended to lower the carbon emissions from the School.
- The University of Essex has developed a Sustainability Sub-Strategy and introduced a Climate Action plan covering the period of 2021-2026. The Sustainability Sub-Strategy outlines the commitment of the university in response to the climate and ecological emergency. The Sustainability Sub-Strategy outlines the aims and strategies the university employs to reduce carbon emissions, educate, and equip students and staff with sustainability knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to play an active role in building a more sustainable and equitable future, and increase research that supports the enhancement and protection of the environment.
- The University of Essex is located in Wivenhoe Park. This 220-acre landscaped park has won the Green Flag Award six years in a row. A green space policy is being developed to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and encourage biodiversity in the park.
- The University is improving its recycling of waste as well as striving towards and overall decline in waste production through for instance the reduce of use plastics and elimination of single use plastics wherever possible.

Anti-Corruption

- The University maintains anti-corruption/anti-bribery guidance. The guidance makes clear that the University has a zero-tolerance approach toward corrupt activities. It applies to all employees, including consultants, contractors, trainees, volunteers, agents, agency staff, sponsors, and all other persons associated with the universities and any of its subsidiaries or their employers, no matter where they are located (within or outside the UK).

Measurements of Outcomes

Human Rights

- Dr Julie Hannah helped to produce the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy, which was this year recommended by the OHCHR as part of the UN joint action plan to improve the human rights situation in the Philippines.
- The Digital Verification Unit hosted by the School of Law and Human Rights Centre has won multi-million pound grants and important prizes for its work.
- The RightsCast has produced more than two dozen episodes to date, and has been downloaded and listened to by people from across the globe.

Labour

- The University of Essex has a bronze award in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index
- The University of Essex is an Athena SWAN Bronze institution award holder, recognizing the steps we are taking to promote gender equality. 9 of our departments also hold Athena SWAN Bronze awards and 3 departments hold Athena SWAN silver awards.
- In September 2014, we were one of only five universities to achieve an Institutional Gender Equality Charter Mark.

Environment

- The University's new Essex Business School includes smart technology intended to improve on the baseline carbon emissions by being "lean" (reducing carbon emissions from the baseline by 18% via energy efficient measures), being "green" (offsetting carbon emissions by over 20% through renewable technologies and being Clean by utilising CHP.
- We have solar panels on 11 buildings across Colchester campus and we currently generate approximately 2.5% of our own electricity on-site through these solar panels, and there are projects under way to install more.

Anti-Corruption

- All staff of the University and all budget holders (any member of staff who has been given delegated budgetary authority or funds to manage) are required to comply with the anti-corruption regulation. This involves, among other things, ensuring that all staff complete a training session on the University's anti-corruption policies. The Competency Framework project has resulted in significant changes in the structuring of traditional human resource management.