



Cambridge  
Assessment

# UN Global Compact Communication on Progress

May 2019 – May 2021



# Introduction

The world has experienced phenomenal change over the last year and we have all been under significant pressure to adapt.

Thanks to the resilience and commitment of our people and our focus on our mission to contribute to society through education, we have been able to continue to serve learners around the world as well as look after our teams. We are dedicated to helping learners and our people demonstrate and achieve their potential, and over this last 15 months, we truly have seen our purpose in action. Whether it was supporting schools to move to remote learning, innovating across our products so we could provide young people with the tools to progress with their lives, or supporting our global colleagues with their mental health, our focus on acting responsibly, collaborating to succeed and innovating as an organisation has carried us through.

I am proud to lead an organisation that not only upholds the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), but also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Delivering our first Communication on Progress after a year of significant challenge has been a great opportunity to reflect on how our commitment to our core values helps us to be at our best, no matter what the situation.

We prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our 2800 global staff and the communities in which we work worldwide. Maintaining that priority as the pandemic emerged early in 2020 meant closing our offices and establishing new ways of working

to ensure our global professionals have had the resources to adopt remote working and delivery.

This has been a period of unrest and at a time where racial injustice has been at the forefront of the world's attention. As an organisation we pride ourselves on championing diversity, trust and respect wherever we operate. We are playing our part in tackling all forms of inequality through the millions of learners we reach every year but we also work hard to promote equality and diversity in our workplace. However, we recognise that there is more we can do to tackle inequality and build a more diverse organisation that truly reflects the communities we serve.

This is a time for us to take our values forward as we deepen our partnership with Cambridge University Press and become one organisation from August 2021. This move will help us to reach more learners and grow our impact in a way that helps us to build a more equal world for all.

**Saul Nassé**, Chief Executive

# About Cambridge Assessment



We are an international exams group designing and delivering assessments to over 8 million learners in over 170 countries. We are committed to ensuring that all our assessments are fair, have sound ethical underpinning, and operate according to the highest technical standards. Our organisation is not-for-profit.

Cambridge Assessment was established as the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) by the University of Cambridge in 1858. We were set up to administer local examinations for students who were not members of the University of Cambridge, with the aim of raising standards in education. We also inspected schools. Today, we develop and deliver examinations and tests in 170 countries and we own and manage [OCR](#), [Cambridge Assessment International Education](#) and [Cambridge Assessment English](#), as well as carrying out leading-edge and operational [research on assessment in education](#). We are the oldest exams group still in existence and the only one attached to a university.

We employ over 2800 people; over 1500 of whom are in our head office in Cambridge in the United Kingdom; 350 in our Midlands-based offices in the UK and others based in over 50 regional offices and operational facilities both in the UK and internationally. As well as providing assessments, we provide consultancy in a number of capacities to a wide variety of institutions around the world. We work closely with agencies, governments and ministries to try to ensure that all assessment systems around the world are valid, reliable and trustworthy.

Our mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence and we strive to open doors for learners, to unlock the power of education and give them the confidence to thrive. We work with many national educational organisations and ministries through our international organisations, Cambridge English and Cambridge International, which helps us to create opportunity for learners around the world.

We believe that educational integrity should be at the heart of all assessment and that tests and qualifications are only of value if they inform the learning process and reflect the true status of an individual's knowledge and understanding. We are committed to ensuring all learners access the benefits of their education through a fair and accurate assessment of their skills, knowledge and understanding.

This philosophy of fairness and integrity runs through everything we do, and we are committed to the delivery of our goals through integrating our values of responsibility, collaboration and innovation in the way we work together, both in teams and as individuals.

# Human rights

---

**Every individual who encounters Cambridge Assessment will be treated with respect and dignity.**

---

**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.

In a rapidly changing world, the decisions we make and the business pressures we face are growing increasingly more complex. Our Code of Conduct underpins everything that we do and holds us to the highest level of ethical standards in conducting the complexities of our business.

We respect the human rights of our employees as well as the individuals and communities who work with us. We operate in many different legal and regulatory environments that present specific challenges, but we seek to build and sustain a strong culture of integrity and compliance throughout the organisation, acting with honesty and fairness in all our dealings. Due to the global nature of our operations, we adapt our approaches to take into consideration and mitigate local breaches of integrity. For example, working with recent partners, UNICEF and the World Bank, we developed a joint approach to compliance in areas such as safeguarding of children, financial regulations and alignment of ethical standards.

These requirements are monitored throughout the life cycle of our projects to ensure that integrity and standards are maintained.

We adhere to the highest levels of health and safety for our people and in early 2020, our Group Print and Operations centres received ISO 45001:2018 certification, and also gained recognition of their commitment to occupational health, safety and wellbeing by being awarded a Merit in the British Safety Council's International Safety Awards in both 2020 and 2021. This was combined with the roll-out of our Assure Health and Safety (H&S) management system to our entire global operations to help maintain transparency and continue building the trust of our people in our operations and supply chain.

The health and wellbeing of our people and our communities is important to us and we extend our H&S approach to include the provision of a comprehensive global Employee Assistance Programme, an active Mental Health Ambassador Network and a range of health and fitness classes to colleagues across our operations. Wherever possible, we extend our support for mental health and wellbeing to our learners and teachers, for example running a series of blogs accessible to OCR teachers to help them to support the mental wellbeing of their learners during homeschooling. Support for mental health is also at the core of our charity partnerships. Since the end of 2019, our people have fundraised over £15000 for Cambridge-based charity Blue Smile, which provides specialised art therapists to support children with mental health difficulties to better access education.

Cambridge Assessment is dedicated to ensuring all employees are free from discrimination when it comes to managing the demands of both work and life, furthering their own development and experiencing equal pay. In 2019, we launched a new flexible working approach, with 83% of colleagues stating that it was contributing in managing their work-life balance. In September 2020, we were recognised as a Top 30 Family Friendly Employer by charity Working Families. In February 2021, we received accreditation as a UK Living Wage Employer. And we are steadily driving down our gender pay gap. At our last report date (March 2020) we saw a decrease in our Gender Pay Gap of 1.24% from the previous year. Over the next reporting period, Cambridge Assessment will be focusing on increasing our data capabilities relating to our ethnicity pay gap.



# Case study – Responding to Covid-19



Our people-centred approach meant Cambridge Assessment could respond swiftly to the Covid-19 outbreak.

A Covid-19 working group was established in January 2020 to facilitate a coordinated approach across the organisation internationally. Employees were equipped with resources to work from home wherever roles could be delivered offsite and our technical teams quickly procured and provided over 500 laptops to allow a shift to home-working. Anyone who required suitable ergonomic chairs, monitors, keyboards and accessories had access to this equipment. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) team provided guidance on Covid-19 risk management via online training and all employees were requested to complete an online display screen equipment (DSE) assessment. This was then reviewed by the HSW team and over 500 DSE conversations have taken place to ensure that colleagues have a suitable workstation setup. Employees had access to DSE guidance webinars, posture workshops and guidance on how to effectively transition to online working, including training on communicating confidently online.

Safety measures were quickly implemented at our sites, which allowed our buildings to remain

operational to deliver and process exam content for our learners. Our Printing and Operations centres swiftly implemented a raft of Covid-19 prevention measures, including discrete shift patterns, workplace and process redesign, and an asymptomatic Covid-19 testing programme for all staff and contractors – so far over 2500 Covid-19 tests have been completed.

In addition to protecting the physical safety of our employees, Cambridge Assessment has taken measures to support employees with the psychological impact of the pandemic. Flexible working was promoted to ensure that colleagues could balance their work and home demands. Emotional support was provided through our mental health first aiders, our employee assistance programme and peer support through our staff networks. Our wellbeing programme continues to deliver a free programme of physical activity sessions and webinars. Employees have access to a free meditation app, coaching and mentoring resources, and manager support to help them to navigate the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, and beyond.

# Labour

---

**We value differences and diversity in all that we do.**

---

**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; and

**Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

We act with integrity in all our dealings and relationships, and we expect the same high standards from all our people, suppliers, contractors and business partners. We undertake a robust due diligence process when dealing with any new suppliers and, via our Global Procurement Policy, we work with our supply partners and their extended supply chains to minimise negative impacts from trading activities on the environment and local communities.

We are committed to combatting slavery and human trafficking and adhere to Anti-Modern Slavery legislation including the Modern Slavery Act 2015, backed by a robust response system where infringements are uncovered. To further the commitments made within the Global Procurement Policy, we have signed up to the most widely recognised industry standards for labour conditions.

As a global education organisation, we seek to represent the diversity of our learners, and we

strive to create and maintain an environment where everyone is represented, feels included and has a sense of belonging. Whilst we do not utilise collective bargaining we embrace the principle of collective consultation via an established staff forum and conducting staff surveys. We support five Staff Consultative Committees across our operations who work closely with policy and strategy teams to address and integrate the concerns and interests of our people into all areas of business practice. We also support nine influential Staff Networks who contribute to furthering our organisation's purpose by championing the diversity of our colleagues and learners and ensuring all backgrounds are respected and valued in our products, services and activities. These groups have the remit to drive and enact real change and are integral to how our business operates.

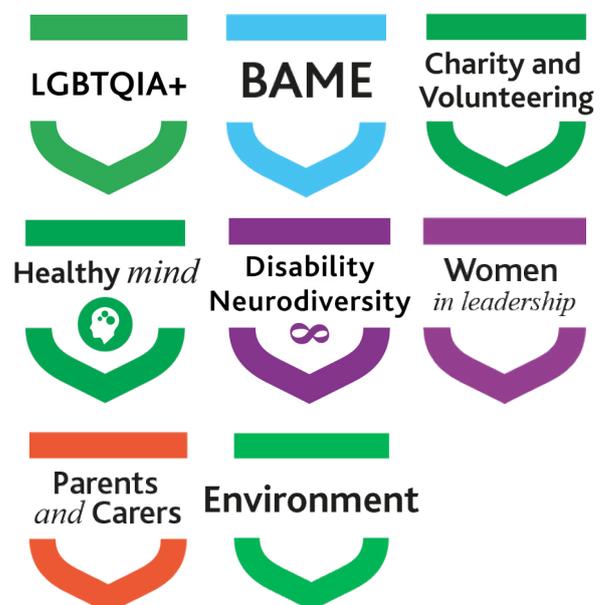
Cambridge Assessment is committed to tackling social injustice and, as part of the global conversation about race we regularly take the opportunity to talk to our people about how we can improve. Checking in through surveys and other feedback mechanisms has helped us to understand how our people feel inclusiveness manifests across Cambridge Assessment and how bias impacts our work and working environment. Our findings led us to launch a first phase of unconscious bias training in January 2021, which uses a train the trainer model to deliver a mix of theory and practical exercises to help improve awareness of bias and inequality amongst our people and provide actionable strategies to reduce its influence. So far, 200 people have been trained, with another 150 places lined up to mid-2021.

In mid-2020, we attained Level 1 on the Disability Confident Framework, increasing the accessibility of our organisation as a potential employer to people with disabilities. We have an action plan to achieve Level 3 over the next two years, which includes the development of an internal support scheme for colleagues with newly diagnosed conditions and launching an 'adjustment passport' to help colleagues communicate additional support or adjustment needs to managers and future employers. This passport will be fully transferable outside of Cambridge Assessment.

And importantly, we are increasingly embedding our values of inclusivity into our products and services. We launched the new Cambridge International guide, *Cambridge principles into practice: languages guide for schools* in April 2021, providing a principles-based approach to a whole-school approach to language inclusion. A new Equality Diversity Inclusion Belonging (EDIB) board will meet from May 2021 to manage and review issues such as inclusivity in qualifications and services. The roll-out of a new Web Accessibility Framework and wholesale updates to our web content is bringing our content to a much broader range of users. From mid-2021, the onboarding of a Director of EDIB will support the further integration and coordination of our EDIB approach into strategy.



**Our staff networks:**



# Case study – Development of an Anti-Racism Action Plan



From mid-2020, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff Network worked collaboratively with our Employee Engagement team to implement an Anti-Racism Action Plan, first published internally in February 2021.

Work began on the plan in summer 2020 in the wake of George Floyd's murder and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests. The impact of the global conversation was an opportunity for the network to focus on supporting the wider organisation in reaffirming its commitment to anti-racism by setting out concrete, measurable actions to drive an inclusive, anti-racist culture across the organisation – most importantly, with a timeline and commitment of resources. The development was collaborative between colleagues, network members and management teams and contributions came through focus groups, one-to-one conversations and by working closely with members of our various staff networks, all led by our BAME network committee.

The result is a 12-point plan to strengthen Cambridge Assessment's commitment to anti-racism. The action points themselves cover a variety of areas from staff recruitment and retention to

policy and reporting, support for hiring panels to increase the diversity of our Board and focusing on talent retention pools for young employees. A tiered system of prioritisation has been established, highlighting areas where the most impact can be had across the organisation, with ethnicity pay gap reporting and widespread unconscious bias training among our most critical tier one items. Each item has been assigned to an owner from across the business who will be responsible for bringing these initiatives to fruition.

Since the launch, this action plan has been critical in driving the roll-out of an accessible unconscious bias training scheme and paving the way for consultation on building the data capabilities for ethnicity pay gap reporting.

# Environment

---

## We aim to be a trusted leader in the drive for a sustainable world.

---

**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.

At Cambridge Assessment, we recognise the climate crisis and that we have a responsibility to address it. We are determined to make a positive impact by industry-leading environmental stewardship throughout our global organisation.

Along with the University of Cambridge and Cambridge University Press our aim is to be carbon zero by 2048, with ambitions to drive this date forward by a decade where possible.

In early 2021, we launched a joint Environment Strategy with the Press, laying out steps and approaches to achieving our carbon zero goal. Guided by international frameworks such as the 2015 Paris Agreement and the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, we set a target of a 72% reduction in all scope 1 and 2 emissions for Cambridge Assessment by 2030, using science-based targets to lay out a road map for this journey. We are conducting extensive data gathering to quantify our impacts relating to scope 3 emissions to build

similar targets for our indirect carbon impacts. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our footprint, particularly relating to travel, and we are seeking mechanisms to adopt a green recovery via the introduction of process efficiencies to drive down air travel and build data on our 'working from home' impact.

To progressively drive down the carbon emissions across our supply chain, we include a contractual obligation for all suppliers to demonstrate their sustainability credentials as part of our Procurement Policy as standard. This requires suppliers to evidence that they have set science-based targets for scopes 1 and 2 of the GHG Protocol, or have aligned their policies with the GHG Protocol. We encourage our suppliers to become members of Carnstone so that we can align data on labour and environment, forest sourcing and chemical and materials, and work collaboratively to better quantify their impacts where needed. We encourage submission of data through the online platform Sedex so we can take a community network approach to help the companies we work with to improve their responsible and sustainable business practices. As one of our major impact areas, we also require that all paper across our supply chain is PREPS 3\* or 5\* certified by the Book Chain Project or has Chain of Custody Certification by the Forest Stewardship Council. In early 2021, we established a paper working group to drive strategic improvements around the impact we have associated with our paper and print supply chain.

To make change happen, we want to empower our people to drive down negative impacts wherever they are identified. We work with a series of internal working groups to examine and deliver initiatives in the areas of Food, Waste and Resources, Energy and Digital to support the delivery of our target pathway. We also work alongside a proactive Environment Staff Network who work to engage and advocate change across the organisation. Their efforts have resulted in the achievement of a Gold Award as part of the National Union of Students Green Impact scheme, to drive and evidence positive environmental impacts across the organisation. In early 2021, the scheme was rolled out to international offices in Madrid and Manila.

As an education organisation, we believe our approach to environment includes educating and engaging our learners and teachers about

sustainability. From our research, we are aware that students around the world are keener than ever before to learn about global issues like climate change in school, but currently almost a third aren't getting the opportunity to do so. We believe it is important that learners have access to up-to-date thinking about global issues and we operate a rolling programme of improvements to ensure the latest science and research relating to sustainability is represented in our products and services. Responding to a gap in the UK curricula in this area, our UK exam board, OCR, has developed a proposal to create a GCSE Natural History aimed at educating young people about the natural world and how humans connect and exist within it. Events such as the Cambridge Global Perspectives™ Week from 1 to 7 March 2020 have provided teachers with the opportunity to engage their learners around key global issues and develop the skills to research, discuss and evaluate the facts, whilst working with others to understand different perspectives around the world.



# Case study – Reducing our single-use plastic reliance



To ensure the safe and secure delivery of our materials to our centres worldwide we use various types of primary and secondary packaging. In 2020, we implemented initiatives to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic, particularly for the use of films. Incremental specification changes to our films resulted in a 21% reduction in weight of packaging by April 2021, amounting to a saving of 11 tonnes per annum. Across our product distribution operations this small change adds up to a saving of 60.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

Other examples of removing additional outer packaging from small UK despatches and from secondary layers around compact disc despatches have saved 1.8 tonnes of plastic annually and combined save a further 6.6 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in the distribution network.

We are exploring the potential to extend our approaches to film reduction across our supply chain once we have analysed the long-term impacts of running exam series during Covid-19.

# Anti-corruption

---

## We value differences and diversity in all that we do.

---

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

Cambridge Assessment is a trusted provider of assessments to over 8 million learners in over 170 countries. We are committed to ensuring that all our assessments are fair, have sound ethical underpinning and operate according to the highest technical standards. Our reputation for honesty, transparency and fairness is an important part of who we are.

We operate a Code of Conduct to help us to do business the right way and we expect our employees, consultants, agents and representatives to be responsible for understanding and adhering to the Code in all their activities. We want to ensure that no Cambridge Assessment employee engages in conduct that raises questions about the company's honesty, impartiality, or reputation unknowingly or otherwise.

We train our employees on the expectations we have in relation to all areas of compliance with the Code. This includes ensuring all employees are

aware of and have access to our Whistleblowing policies and procedures to ensure that risks and issues are reported before they become a violation of law or a risk to health and safety. In 2020, we updated our Whistleblowing portal to make this more accessible to colleagues globally and extended access to the portal to all third parties we work with, to increase the transparency of our dealings.

We adopt robust Anti-Corruption and Bribery policies and expect all colleagues to undertake training on this annually. We adhere to the UK Bribery Act and anti-bribery legislation where we operate globally, such as the Foreign and Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). We accompany this approach with a comprehensive Conflict of Interest Policy and procedures to ensure that all Cambridge colleagues can be open and transparent in their dealings with third parties.

Operating within the UK, we are also bound to adhere to Ofqual regulations for the setting and delivery of examinations. All members of staff must conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition, which apply to all awarding organisations and all regulated qualifications. This ensures that qualifications are valid and fit for purpose and that the Group operates fairly and consistently. Cambridge Assessment has policies and procedures in place to ensure that any conflicts of interest are identified and managed appropriately and takes reasonable steps to prevent occurrence of any malpractice or maladministration in the development, delivery and award of qualifications.

Due to the nature of our business, we also take very seriously any threats to the integrity of data, threats of damage to assets from cyber-attacks or any increase to operational risk levels or other actions that do not meet the standards set out in our Code of Conduct. We adhere to all international data protection laws including the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Freedom of Information Act.



# Case study – Improving rates of compliance



In late 2020, we ran a project to improve awareness and rates of training relating to our compliance requirements. We redeveloped our Compliance training modules and consolidated this learning in one easy-to-access area on our people management software.

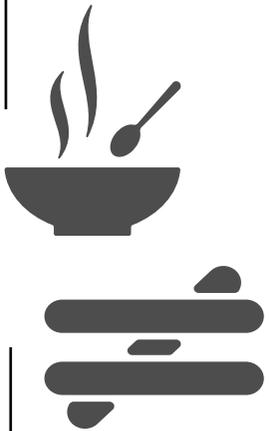
Our redesigned courses include seven key modules covering Bribery and Corruption, Anti-Corruption, Data Protection, Information Security, Manual Handling, Security Awareness and Workplace Assessments with up-to-date policies and procedures, instituting a new course structure and format. These modules are now individually accessible to each employee via their individual personnel file, which provides regular updates and notifications to boost rates of compliance training.

# The UN Sustainable Development Goals

Cambridge Assessment is committed to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to become a reality. As part of our commitment to the United Nations Global Compact, we have reviewed how our work contributes to the SDGs. Between 2019 and 2021, we proactively contributed to 11 of the 17 goals.

## SDG2 – Zero Hunger

Cambridge Assessment provided support to UK-based food poverty initiatives, including 280 kg of surplus food to homeless individuals via the Wintercomfort charity and over £22,000 of funding to the Cambridge and Coventry branches of The Trussell Trust, a UK organisation that provides a network of emergency food and support to people locked in poverty.



## SDG3 – Good Health and Well-Being

We extended Employee Access Provision to 3000 global members of staff.



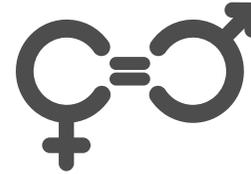
## SDG4 – Quality Education

Following a gender review of Key Stage 1 (KS1) education in the Maldives, Cambridge International delivered training to the National Institute for Education (NIE) in the Maldives to develop capacity to ensure support for a sustainable ongoing approach to curriculum development and review, including an emphasis on gender equality and equity.



## SDG5 – Gender Equality

The Women in Leadership network provided 610 training places on courses including a 'Communications Masterclass' and 'Persuasion techniques' webinars, focused on empowering women to feel more comfortable to speak up and negotiate, and supporting all colleagues to challenge where they experience inequality.



## SDG8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Cambridge Assessment is a Top 100 UK Apprenticeship Employer, currently hosting 240 apprentices across Levels 3-7; helping us to generate growth as an organisation and creating more job opportunities for young people in the UK.



## SDG10 – Reduced Inequalities

Our Anti-Racism Action Plan sets out a 12-point plan to strengthen Cambridge Assessment's commitment to anti-racism and tackling racial discrimination across our areas of influence, building a more inclusive working environment for all.

## SDG11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

Employee volunteers collected over 200 bags of rubbish from the local Cambridge area, working alongside Cambridge City Council to provide healthier spaces for the local community and encourage wildlife to return to waste ground areas.



## SDG12 – Responsible Consumption and Production

Switching to compostable materials for all takeaway packaging and removing all plastics from our service points has enabled Cambridge Assessment to save approximately 132 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year.



## SDG13 – Climate Action

OCR is developing a proposal for a Natural History GCSE to educate and engage learners in the natural world and our place within it.



## SDG15 – Life on Land

By making forecasting improvements, Cambridge Assessment is moving from a print-to-stock to print-to-order system, reducing central printing waste by over 50% and saving 317 tonnes of paper from circulation.



## SDG17 – Partnerships

Our partnership with Cambridge University Press, UNICEF and Microsoft to produce the Learning Passport has provided an online education programme and learning model, accessible to the 1.57 million children affected by school closure due to crises, displacement or Covid-19, enabling them to continue their education journey.

