

# Attention All I-O Programs: It's Time to Join the United Nations Global Compact!

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Purdue University, working as a test case for the SIOP-UN Committee, has become the world's first I-O psychology program to sign the United Nations Global Compact, a global strategy for decent work, setting the stage for I-O programs around the world to more formally engage in the active promotion of I-O psychology for the greater good. Launched in 2000, the Global Compact is a global strategic policy initiative aimed at aligning businesses and other organizations with 10 accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, the environment, and anticorruption. Recognizing that businesses and business-related organizations are the drivers of globalization, signatories of the Global Compact work to improve markets, commerce, technology, and finance in ways that benefit economies and societies around the world. The Global Compact is the world's largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative in the world, with over 12,000 signatories across more than 145 countries.

Although business participation is meant to directly affect activities in the global

marketplace, the UN recognizes the need for participation at multiple levels throughout society. Global Compact nonbusiness membership is open to a wide range of participation, including cities, civil society, and public-sector organizations. Academic and business association participation is especially emphasized by the UN:

Through thought leadership, research, educational resources, learning know-how, and educational infrastructure, this sector can increase knowledge and understanding of corporate responsibility, and thereby advance the agenda of the Global Compact at the local and global level ([Global Compact, 2015](#)).

This type of endorsement allows academic signatories to evidence Global Compact principles through curriculum, research, and training, ensuring that tomorrow's thought leaders in organizational research and practice internalize values of human rights and justice. As part of the rapid move toward global integration and the

prosocial application of I-O psychology, SIOP joined the Global Compact as a nonbusiness participant in 2013. *TIP* has previously featured [a discussion with SIOP member Sean Cruse](#), from the Global Compact department of Communications and Public Affairs, on the important role I-O psychology can play with the Global Compact. However, until now, although top business programs have actively participated in the Global Compact, I-O psychology has not been represented in Global Compact activities.

Signatories to the Global Compact formally commit to aligning activities with the 10 principles. In return, the UN offers participants access to a variety of work groups and connection forums to engage with business and institutions similarly interested in activities pertaining to the Global Compact's core purpose. Signatories are also able to engage directly in Global Compact events and display Global Compact logos and affiliations. Participation is free of charge for academic signatories, and annual reporting requires nothing more than submitting a list of what the program has done over the course of the year that aligns with the principles.

As the first academic I-O signatory, Purdue's program has provided a plan of action to ensure its students, and faculty are aware of the Global Compact Principles and have opportunities to engage in activities that align with them. Such activities include a humanitarian work psychology graduate seminar, brownbag speakers who focus on prosocial I-O sorts of topics, and an across-faculty research focus on justice, social responsibility, and employee well-being.

Joining is simple. All that is required to apply is a letter of application by the I-O program (both PhD and MA/MS programs are welcome) but signed by the department head and/or dean. For most programs, joining will not require any restructuring of existing policies or practices but rather concretely linking the Global Compact principles to existing activities. The SIOP-UN Committee has prepared a **Global Compact Application Kit** that will make application to the Global Compact quick and easy for I-O programs interested in joining. It contains a sample application letter; a slide deck "pitch" presentation for faculty, students, and department/college leadership; FAQs; a sample annual report; and other useful information. The SIOP-UN will also be rolling out similar tool kits for corporations, consulting firms, and public-sector organization. For more information or to solicit the committee's help on Global Compact applications and/or annual reports, please contact them at [SIOPUN@siop.org](mailto:SIOPUN@siop.org).

By training new generations of I-O psychologist, I-O graduate programs have enormous impact on the future of our field. We therefore encourage them to formally affirm the Global Compact principles and actively take part in the promotion of human rights, labor, the environment, and anticorruption through student education and scholarly practice. Formal endorsement sets a standard of accountability, ensuring that the values espoused by the Global Compact and already reflected in institutionalized codes, such as [the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#), take an explicitly central role in I-O's future.