Lecture 5:
Codes of Ethics

ENG101 Engineering Professionalism

Dr. Zaid Ahmad, PhD, MIEEE
Advisor, IEEE CUI Lahore
COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus

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Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct?

❑Wide range of acceptable employee behaviors to ensure a healthy working environment

❑Code of Ethics:
o Ethics guidelines to direct values and decisions affecting the employees' decision-making
o Ethical principles and standards of behavior that govern the conduct of a particular profession or group
o Ethical principles beyond the workplace and extend to the broader society

❑Code of Conduct:
o Regulations for specific actions that are deemed appropriate or inappropriate.
o Rules and regulations that outline acceptable behaviors and actions expected of employees within an organization
o Behavior in the workplace such as discrimination, harassment, and conflicts of interest

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Role of Code of Ethics

❑Serving and protecting the public: advanced expertise comparted to general public and risks to the public

❑Guidance: general guidance and primary responsibilities, supplementary description is required

❑Inspiration: profession's collective commitment, motivation for ethical conduct in terms of safety, health and welfare

❑Shared standards: minimum standard of professional excellence in a fair playing field to compete for the clients

❑Support for responsible professionals: group backings on taking stands on moral issues

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Role of Code of Ethics

❑Education and mutual understanding: prompt discussion and reflection on moral issues in academic and professional communities, social groups and diverse audience (societies, classrooms, trainings etc.)

❑Deterrence and Discipline: investigations, paralegal proceedings, legal proceedings, sanctions, expulsion, loss of self-esteem

❑Contribute to the Profession's Image: effective service of professionals due to warranted image of the profession, possibilities of self-regulation with minimal or no government regulation

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Limitations of Codes of Ethics

❑Vagueness: substantial areas of vagueness but they are often required

❑Conflicting entries: no priorities are available

❑Proliferation: disagreement of multiple codes of ethics

❑Incompleteness: responsibilities and rights

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Efforts for Unification of Codes of Ethics

World Federation of Engineering Organizations

On March 4, 1968, representatives of 50 scientific and technical associations from all over the world met under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris to establish the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), whose charter as an international, non-governmental organization is to unite multidisciplinary engineering associations throughout the world.

Members

WFEO at a glance

WFEO model code of ethics

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Efforts for Unification of Codes of Ethics

Engineering Plan

Strategic Plan

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Compliance Programmes

❑Organization's internal controls process to detect and prevent ethical violations
o Well-designed?
o Applied in good faith?
o Works?

❑Compliance Risks
o Corruption
o Environmental, health and safety
o Data protection
o Employment

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Best Practices for Compliance

❑Tone from the top

❑A code of conduct should reflect the business

❑Risk-based reviews

❑Oversight and resources

❑Training

❑Confidential reporting

❑Investigation

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Best Practices for Compliance

❑Discipline and incentives

❑Third-party relationships

❑Continuous improvements

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References

1. Zhu, Q., Martin, M. W., & Schinzinger, R. (2022). *Ethics in engineering*.

2. https://blog.whistleblowersecurity.com/blog/code-of-ethics-and-code-of-conduct-whats-the-difference

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