



ETHICS

SUBMISSION 1

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Task 1

Introduction for Investigation

For the following investigation I have chosen to review the code of ethics for Engineers Australia which can be found at <https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/ethics>

Engineers Australia

Engineers Australia is a professional society and not-for-profit organization which aims to be a forum for the advancement of engineering within Australia. They offer different grades of membership depending on one's status, experience and level of education.

The code of ethics contains guidelines for behaving in a manner as competent as possible, with respect for the public and the environment. It does not intend to be an exhaustive list for all conceivable scenarios, but it does intend to set a baseline standard to follow, and offer some guidelines on how to behave and conduct oneself.

Comparison with ACS

Generally speaking the two codes are quite similar, both promoting a culture of honesty and integrity. The main noticeable differences are that;

- Engineers Australia has an added focus on the sustainability of the environment
- Engineers Australia has an added focus on safety and community wellbeing

The ACS code of ethics places the "Primacy of the Public Interest" at the top position in their code of ethics, which would naturally include public safety, but due to the nature of the engineering industry, they have a greater focus on safety than a purely ICT company.

I prefer Engineers Australia's focus on integrity, where it includes honesty as a *part* of integrity. I think ACS having listed honesty on its own, is ignoring the larger picture of what honesty is for; which is to aid in integral behaviour and decision making.

Engineers Australia also takes a better approach to competence, suggesting acting within your own competence level, and informing clients or employees if you're undertrained for a task. I think this is a responsible approach and facilitates an open, honest relationship with employer and employee, ultimately leading to greater professional development.

Engineers Australia also include promoting sustainability, which I suppose it could be argued that it is covered in the ACS code of ethics as "The Enhancement of Quality of Life" but that

seems rather vague. Promoting sustainability within the code of ethics goes beyond doing only what is required in a business sense, and promotes the idea of acting in a way that benefits the entire world.

Overall I think Engineers Australia have a better code, as it defines more detail and seems better thought out. ACS has a good code, but with such a lack of detail it comes across as being vague. Being guiding principles instead of procedures, it is probably a matter of debate as to whether more or less detail is helpful, but in my opinion; Engineering Australia have a clearer code that makes more sense.

I like Engineering Australia's code of ethics and I would feel comfortably adhering to the code as best as I could although, as an IT professional I would want to see some inclusions to the code of ethics, particularly in the areas of data protection and privacy. The nature of engineering doesn't really warrant a heavy emphasis on data protection the same way an ICT company *should* (ACS didn't include this either), but I would suggest the following inclusions to be made within the "Demonstrate Integrity" segment.

- Recognize, respect and assist the rights of individuals to maintain their data privacy, and conform to all laws regarding data privacy including the Australian Privacy Principles
- Collect only the required amount of data to perform a specific task
- Be transparent about what the data will be used for
- Be transparent about where the data will be stored
- Be transparent about who will have access to the data
- Be transparent about security measures in place to protect data
- Be transparent about which third parties to whom you may potentially share data with

ICT companies often seem reluctant to disclose specific details about who they share your data with, and with the vast amount of data being collected in this modern day I find this to be an increasing concern. I would suggest it to be paramount to the integrity of *any company* to be transparent about what data they have collected and who they share it with. In my opinion, this belongs in the code of ethics as it one of the most significant and expanding ethical dilemmas' currently faced.

Task 2

Introduction for New Code of Ethics

This document contains a code of ethics which will help to facilitate both individual and corporate growth. By acting integrally and respecting privacy, the public will build trust with our organization. By being our best selves at work we continue to learn and keep ourselves engaged with what we do.

Code of Ethics

Integrity

Integrity should be at the forefront of every decision we make and we will take pride in acting with integrity as often as possible. We will always strive to be our best selves and find the balance between our corporate interests and public interest.

- Be honest with fellow employees, clients and stakeholders
- Be honest with yourself about your capabilities and your opinions
- Take time to gather information and make considerations before making decisions, do not act impulsively
- Do what you think is right. If it is not clear what is right, speak up and gather more information
- Listen to criticism with humility and openness
- Offer criticisms freely, with respect for the feelings of others
- Acknowledge the skills and abilities of other people
- Treat people with respect, regardless of race, sexual orientation or religion
- Speak up when you see something wrong

Privacy

Privacy is developing concern for many people, particularly with the amount of data now being collected from many different organizations. We need to make sure we find a balance between our own corporate interests and the interests of the public in a way that is fair and equitable.

- Be transparent about what data is collected

- Be transparent about data storage, security and handling
- Be transparent about who will have access to data
- Limit collection of data to only what is needed for our purposes
- Speak up if you see a privacy issue, regardless of your position at the company
- Consider the rights of the individual when making decisions relating to data

Competence and Development

We pride ourselves in our competence and abilities and seek to further our abilities where we can. We will be honest about our limitations both to ourselves and our fellow employees.

- Act within the scope of your abilities
- Be interested
- Take steps to continue learning
- Don't assume you already know everything; listen to people
- Speak up when you don't have the required knowledge in order to complete a task

Leadership

Being a leader means more than simply being in charge of someone else. By acting in a way that encourages others to be their best, everyone can be a leader.

- Acknowledge that you are representing the company
- Dress and conduct yourself appropriately
- Take initiative and make suggestions
- Don't be afraid to speak up, if you have something to say, say it
- Don't immediately disregard the opinions of others
- Listen to learn what the other person is communicating, don't listen to think about what you are going to reply!
- Communicate with people effectively and respectfully

Responsibility

We have responsibilities both as part of a company and also as individuals. We have responsibilities to other people, to ourselves and to the world around us.

- Consider our environmental impact and make decisions to help mitigate our own footprint
- Act in the best interest of public
- Be sensitive to the concerns of others
- Work to find a balance between the requirements of today and the requirements of the future. This includes the use of resources.
- Act safely and put measures in place to protect the mental and physical health of employees and where appropriate the public

Distribution

To distribute the new code of ethics to stakeholders, we will compile an email containing the new code, in addition to a short questionnaire. The questionnaire is to ascertain whether the code was understood by the stakeholder, and will contain a list of questions followed by a space where the stakeholder can offer their thoughts or suggestions.

Task 3

Introduction for Implementation

This document contains the changes required to implement the new code of ethics which was completed in task 2 of this assignment. It will explain what the changes are, what they are for, how they take place in a practical sense, and how they will be reviewed.

New Practices

To incorporate the new code of ethics, two significant work practices will need to be introduced;

Data Protection

The first new work practice will be to periodically check if the data we are gathering is required for what we are doing and check whether our data collection and handling practices still currently comply with Australian legislation and the Australian Privacy Principles. By not only remaining compliant with legislation, but by making privacy a core issue in our code, we will become a company that people trust.

Implementing this new work practice will basically be done by figuring out the data requirements for our current goals, and comparing those data requirements to the data that we are actually collecting. In practice this may either be done in a meeting or via email correspondence. If it is discovered that we are collecting more data than required, we will then act by altering our data collection practice, and notify our employees and users of the new change. If it is found that we require *more* data to achieve our current goals, we need to first check whether the new collections will comply with Australian legislation and we also need to ask how this will impact on our users. A separate meeting may be needed to discuss ethical implications.

Regular checks also need to be performed to keep up to date with legislation and ensure current business practices remain compliant. A nominated individual will be tasked to perform these routine checks and ensure that we are continually remaining compliant.

Environmental Impact Assessments

The second work practice to introduce is to periodically perform environmental impact assessments. We want to help the world, not make it worse, so by implementing sustainable solutions and keeping track of the resources we use, we can do our part and hopefully encourage others to do the same.

Regular, scheduled meetings will take place where we will perform our environmental impact assessments. Prior to the meetings we will gather information about our use of resources so that we can determine if what we do is valuable enough to justify the resources we use. The process may be difficult at first because *what we do* may be difficult to quantify, but over time asking the question will help steer the decisions of the organization towards greater goals.

A nominated individual will take time to research environmentally sustainable solutions for things such as electricity and paper and bring suggestions to the meeting to keep the company as green as possible.

Internal company surveys will provide details for how our staff thinks we are doing in terms of our environmental impact and it will offer them the opportunity to make suggestions.

Task 4

Introduction for Grievance Process

This document contains information about how to file a grievance about the code of ethics, and includes a process to follow for reporting breaches.

How to File a Grievance

If someone feels as though the code of ethics is unfair or unjust, and they are experiencing dissatisfaction or discontentment as a result of that, they may lodge a formal grievance document. The template for this document will be provided on the company website, and the completed document can be emailed to the human resources department. Note that a grievance cannot be lodged anonymously because the follow up process will require the individual to answer questions.

Reporting Breaches of the Code of Ethics

To confidentially report a breach of the company's code of ethics, an online form will be provided on the website, at the same page where the code of ethics can be accessed. This form will be sent anonymously to the human resources departments, where the breach will then be further investigated.

Grievance Process

When a grievance is first submitted to the human resources department, within 48 hours a reply email will be sent to inform the sender that their grievance is being looked into.

It will then be identified whether the grievance is a matter of non-compliance with Australian law. If so, all relevant legislation will be reviewed to ensure that the code is compliant.

After independent investigation by a member of the human resources department, the person who sent the initial grievance will be brought in for a meeting. Often times, if an employee feels emotionally charged about a particular issue, they may not always make clear arguments. It is important to be able to condense the grievance down to simple facts.

After the meeting, the human resources member will consider all the facts and weigh up the pros and cons. They will then send a document to whoever is responsible for updating the code of ethics, with their recommendation for action, giving reasoned advice.

The person(s) responsible for the code of ethics will then inform the human resources member of their decision and if it is determined worthwhile to change the code, they will then employ the process for updating the code of ethics.

The desired outcome is for everyone to understand each other and agree on a set standard of ethical behaviour that we are all willing to adhere to.

Ensuring Compliance with the Code

Ensuring that stakeholders are applying the code of ethics is done by facilitating an environment of open discussion. By initially creating a code that everyone feels good about will make it more likely that people will naturally want to adhere to the code.

This is backed up by allowing people to lodge confidential reports for breaches of the code of ethics. This encourages everyone to feel responsible for upholding the company's ethics.

Review of Compliance

Any information that is to be sent to stakeholders regarding the code of ethics will first be looked over to ensure that is consistent and appropriate.

To avoid unnecessarily annoying stakeholders with multiple meetings about the code of ethics, instead a brief questionnaire will be periodically sent out via email, to ensure that the code of ethics remains understood by everyone.