

Module 2

TYPES OF ETHICS

1. General ethics
2. Professional ethics
3. Legal ethics
4. Environmental Ethics
5. Duty Ethics and Rights Ethics
6. Corporate/ Business Ethics

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND ENGINEERING PROFESSION

CODE OF ETHICS IN ENGINEERING PROFESSION

ETHICAL COMPETENCY

General Ethics

Ethics are principles and values, which together with societal, organizational and professional rules of conduct and laws, regulate a person.

Ethics is based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

Secondly, ethics refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards.

Ethics also means, then, the continuous effort of studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct, and striving to ensure that we, and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based.

Examples: Pluralism, Tolerance, Democratic Values: Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity etc.

Professional Ethics

Professional ethics are ethical principles that influences our behaviour in an organizational setup.

Every profession and organization has its own set of rules, regulations, standards, laws what cumulatively called as “Code of Conduct” or “Organizational Rule book”.

Various Professional Ethics

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Responsiveness
- Confidentiality
- Trustworthiness
- Objectivity
- Respect

Difference between General ethics and professional ethics

Personal or general ethics refers to the ethics that a person identifies with in respect to people and situations that they deal with in everyday life.

Professional ethics refers to the ethics that a person must adhere to in respect of their interactions and business dealings in their professional life.

General ethics are unwritten while professional ethics are documented.

General ethics are learned from family, friends, society while Professional ethics are learned from organization working for.

Difference between General ethics and professional ethics

In some cases, personal and professional ethics may clash and cause a moral conflict.

For example: A doctor may not personally believe that the course of medical treatment chosen by a patient is the right one. However, under the Code of Ethics of the Medical Association, the doctor must respect the rights, autonomy and freedom of choice of the patient.

In professional and organizational setup, a person must adhere to the professional ethics than his personal ethics. This is called as integrity.

Legal ethics

The lawyers and judges are integral to the working-out of the law and the Rule of Law itself is founded on principles of justice, fairness and equity.

If they do not adhere and promote these ethical principles then the law will fall into disrepute and people will resort to alternative means of resolving conflict.

The Rule of Law will fail with a rise of public discontent.

The fundamental aim of legal ethics is to maintain the honor and dignity of the law profession, to secure the spirit of friendly cooperation between the Bench and the Bar in the promotion of higher standard of justice.

The legal profession is not a business but a profession created by state for public good.

Bar Council of India

The Advocates Act, 1961 empowers the Bar Council of India to make rules relating to the standards of professional conduct and etiquette to be observed by advocates.

In view of the above, following duties have been briefly explained:

Lawyers To Court

- Respecting the court
- Follow appropriate dress code
- Don't take up cases of clients who insist on use of unfair means
- Have a dignified behaviour

Lawyers To Lawyers

- Do not promote unauthorized practice
- Avoid advertisement and solicitation of work
- Appear after consent of fellow advocate

Lawyers To Opponent

- Fulfill the promises made
- No negotiations with party directly
- The bar association has also stated that the license of the lawyers who do not abide by the code of ethics would be confiscated besides facing trial and imprisonment if found guilty.

Lawyers To Client

- Don't take cases where the lawyer has to be a witness
- Never withdraw service halfway
- Don't refuse a brief
- Give client top priority
- Don't try to tamper with the evidence or suppress it
- Act according to the client's instructions
- Fees adjustment as per liability is a strict no
- Bidding for purchasing property arising of legal proceeding is a strict no
- Don't take undue advantage of the client's trust
- Variation in charges depending upon the success of the case is a strict no
- Proper accounting of everything is important
- Absolute clarity about things with the client is necessary
- Secrecy of the information received from the client

Environment Ethics

Environmental ethics is a branch of applied philosophy that studies the moral and ethical relationship of human beings to the environment.

Environmental ethics helps to define man's moral and ethical obligations toward the environment.

Environmental ethics believe that humans are a part of society as well as other living creatures, which includes plants and animals.

These items are a very important part of the world and are considered to be a functional part of human life.

Environmental Ethics and Development:

Creating a healthy balance between development and environment is the major factor for obtaining the sustainable development goal.

Sustainable development implies harmony on human-environment interactions and inter-generation responsibility, with emphasis on a harmonious relationship among population, resources, environment and development.

The role of environmental ethics toward sustainable development is that it not only harmonizes the relationship of population, resource, environment and economic development, but also guide behaviour selection, push social and political system transformation, strengthen the legal system, and raise environmental awareness of the public.

Environment ethics recognizes that all development decisions must simultaneously consider aspects of Economy, Environment, and Equity.

Business/Corporate Ethics

Business ethics are related to the aspects of business dealing with all employees in an ethical manner.

Business ethics are similar to professional ethics.

An organization is expected to follow certain ethical values in its functioning, establishment, employee welfare, operations, environmental factors, waste management and the issues related to the people living around, etc.

These factors affect the reputation of the company and indirectly affect the value of its shares in the global market.

The main principles of admirable business ethics can be - being trustful, open minded, meeting obligations, having the documents clear with good accounting control, etc.

Business/Corporate Ethics

The general business ethics include the following aspects –

- Be it any industry or a corporate office, the infrastructure and the working environment should be comfortable and encouraging.
- The safety precautions and maintenance of the organization are to be taken care of.
- The work and the skills of the employees are to be identified and encouraged for the development of the organization.
- A hierarchical procedure is to be followed, maintaining the ethical standards for the execution of work.
- The product maintenance right from the procurement raw material to the dispatch of product should be done in a standard procedure uninfluenced by any unethical issues.
- No tolerance should be there for any kind of unethical behavior or influences that affect the production and organizational standards.
- To encourage the activities that promote social good and are environment-friendly.

Duty Ethics vs Rights Ethics

Duty Ethics

Duty ethics simply means that these ethics place a duty on others.

Immanuel Kant was one of the most popular duty ethicists. He says that all the duties derive from one fundamental duty. And that fundamental duty which he suggests in that respect a person.

Duty ethics follows Deontological approach i.e. means justify the end.

Duty-based ethics sets absolute rules.

Duty Ethics vs Rights Ethics

Right Ethics

Right ethics are ethics that most important to human rights.

According to the right ethics theory, human rights is the ultimate appeal and it should be respected.

The rights of a person towards life, health, liberty, possession, etc. are taken care of under this theory.

The Rights based ethical theory was proposed by **John Locke**.

Right ethics also applies to engineer. In the engineering code of ethics, we give paramount importance to the safety, health, and welfare of the public.

Rights-based ethics follows Teleological approach i.e. end justify the means.

Ethics for Engineering profession

Engineering itself is based on the improvement of current life, whether in terms of technology or efficiency or availability with less financial efforts.

Engineers as Experimenters

In the process of developing a product, an engineer generally learns through experimentation.

To simply put, a trial and error method is the mostly used one to obtain results.

Code of ethics for engineering profession

The engineering societies such as **IEEE, Engineering Council of India, Institutes of Engineers**, etc. have framed the codes of ethics which are helpful to engineers to strengthen the moral issues on their work.

- Safety, health, and welfare of the public is paramount.
- Perform service in the areas of their competence.
- Avoid deceptive acts.
- Acknowledge the errors and mistakes.
- Shall not promote their own interest at the expense of the dignity and integrity of the profession and organization.

Role of ethics in engineering profession

1. Serving and protecting the public
2. Respect to Superiors
3. Inspiration for juniors
4. Shared Standards for all
5. Support for Responsible Professionals
6. Education and Mutual understanding
7. Deterrence and Discipline
8. Contributing to the Profession's Image

Advantages of the code of ethics in profession.

1. Set out the ideals and responsibilities of the profession.
2. Exert a de facto regulatory effect protecting both clients and professionals.
3. Improve the profile of the profession.
4. Motivate and inspire practitioners, by attempting to define their *raison d'être*.
5. Provide guidance on acceptable conduct.
6. Raise awareness and consciousness of issues.
7. Improve quality and consistency.

Ethical Competency

Ethical competence is described as an experience acquired through the combination of knowledge and practice.

An individual who do not possess strength of character might not “do what is correct” or “take correct action” in a given situation.

Ethical competence concerns character strength, ethical awareness, moral judgement skills and the willingness to do good.

The prerequisites for ethical competence are professional virtues, experience of professionalism, human communication, ethical knowledge and a supportive organizational environment

Ethical Competency

Ethical competence is a key distinguisher between simply having skills and having a true sense of professionalism.

It is the stage beyond technical competence where ethical competence must be considered when extending policies to support skill and competencies to training and education for professional occupations.

Importance of ethical competency for an engineer

Upholding Public Trust

Making Ethical Decisions

Mitigating Corruption and Misconduct

Enhancing Professionalism and Credibility

Promoting Accountability and Transparency

Fostering a Positive Organizational Culture