

# ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

## Case Study Instructor's Guide

### Using the case study template structure

1. Have students read the case study narrative (3-5 minutes)
2. Give students time to write reflection on the narrative individually (5 minutes)
  - What is the moral problem?
  - What sections of the Code are most relevant?
  - What biases and tendencies should you acknowledge and set aside?
3. Allow students to complete small-group guided inquiry
  - Exploration and context (3-5 minutes)
  - Interpretation and analysis (15-20 minutes)
    - Emphasize the grounding in the language of the Code
  - Decision and action (10 minutes)
    - Consider multiple frameworks: Social contract, deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics
4. Debrief and discuss with historical context
  - Have students respond to open-ended questions specific to the case
  - Critique real outcomes in light of earlier discussion and the Code

### Tips for teaching with case studies

Before you start<sup>1</sup>:

- What do you want students to learn from the discussion of the case?
- What do they already know that applies to the case?
- What are the issues that may be raised in discussion?
- How will the case and discussion be introduced?
- What preparation is expected of students?
- What directions do you need to provide to students?
- Do you need to divide students into groups or will they discuss as the whole class?
- Are you going to use role-playing or facilitators or record keepers? If so, how?
- What are the opening questions?
- How much time is needed for students to discuss the case?
- What concepts are to be applied/extracted during the discussion?
- How will you evaluate students?

During the session:

- Emphasize the importance of student preparation and participation.

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<sup>1</sup> Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching Guide to Case Studies  
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/cft/guides-sub-pages/case-studies/>

- Let the students speak and redirect questions to the class.
- Listen actively and identify common themes and conflicts.
- Summarize points and poll the class for agreement.
- Redirect attention to different parts of the room and to alternate perspectives.
- Ask for missing information.
- Summarize key “take home” messages.

### Assignment Evaluation Rubrics<sup>2</sup>

#### Dimensions for Ethical Reasoning

- Ethical Self-Awareness
- Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts
- Ethical Issue Recognition
- Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts
- Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts

#### Dimensions for Critical Thinking

- Explanation of issues
- Evidence
- Influence of context and assumptions
- Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)
- Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)

### References and resources

- W. R. Collins and K. W. Miller, “Paramedic ethics for computer professionals, *Journal of Systems and Software - Special issue on computer ethics*, 17(1), Jan. 1992.
- E. Andersen and B. Schiano, *Teaching with Cases: A Practical Guide*, Harvard Business Review Press, 2014.
- R. Barger, *Computer Ethics: A Case-based Approach*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- *Instructor’s Guide for Facilitating Classroom Epidemiologic Case Studies*, CDC <https://www2a.cdc.gov/epicasestudies/classroom/crguide.pdf>
- M. R. Sudzina, “Twenty strategies for facilitating case discussions and engaging students,” *International Journal of Case Method Research & Application*, 17(3), 2005.
- *Hints for Case Teaching*, Harvard Business Publishing. [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/resources/marketing/docs/M00016\\_Hints\\_for\\_Case\\_Teaching\\_Brochure.pdf](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/resources/marketing/docs/M00016_Hints_for_Case_Teaching_Brochure.pdf)
- National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science <http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/collection/>

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<sup>2</sup> American Association of Colleges & Universities VALUE Rubrics.  
<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

### Exploration and context

Answer the following questions based on the facts provided in the narrative.

1. Who are the relevant actors of the case?
2. Who are the relevant stakeholders of the case?
3. What were the observable effects of the actions or decisions of actors in this case?
4. What additional details would help to provide greater understanding of the situational context or the actors' choices?

### Interpretation and analysis

1. What responsibilities and authority did each actor have that may have influenced their actions (or lack thereof) in this case?
2. What rights (legal, natural, or innate) of stakeholders were impacted in this case? How important is upholding these particular rights and how severely would they be impacted by the outcomes of this case?
3. What potential actions were not performed that could have influenced the outcomes of this case?
4. What organizational practices, policies, or priorities are likely to have shaped the choices of actors in this particular case?
5. What technical facts are most relevant to the actions or choices of the actors or your eventual decision?

6. Identify the sections of the ACM Code of Ethics most relevant to the actions and decisions of all actors in this case.
7. Which actions (or lack of action) supported or violated the prescriptions of the ACM Code of Ethics? Identify the two or three actions that are most relevant for making a decision in this case.

#### Decision and action

1. What is the goal of the decision that you are trying to make in this case? What personal, institutional, or legal values are you trying to uphold?
2. How might your decision in this case be used as a foundation for future cases that are similar in nature?
3. What action would you take in this case and why?
4. How does your recommended action align with the prescriptions of the ACM Code of Ethics?