**Professional experience**

LU5: Professional Standards and Ethical Practice

Review IBM – Southbank’s working practices and professional standards and discuss an ethical dilemma noticed within the organisation.

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# Introduction

## AIM

My aim for this Learning Unit is to gain theoretical and practical exposure to some legal, social, ethical and professional issues that have arisen due to modern computing in IBM Southbank. I will also research the standards and codes of practice that guide professionals in responding to these issues.

## Objectives

1. Review the ethos and working practices of IBM Southbank, and how it compares to that of the industry sector.
2. Determine the impact that computing, information systems or digital media have regarding legal, ethical, social and professional issues within IBM and other competitor companies.
3. Discuss ethical dilemmas noticed so far working at in the workplace.
4. Evaluate sources of professional guidance and compare/contrast to actual practice.
5. Evaluate the usefulness of ethical frameworks and professional codes of practice.

# Ethos & Working Practices

Review the ethos and working practices of IBM Southbank, and how it compares to that of the industry sector.

## IBM’s Working Practices

Before joining IBM, I was given a documents named ‘Business Conduct Guidelines’. It begins with a letter from the former chairman and CEO Samuel J. Palmisano.

As he left in January 2012, this shows that the document hasn’t been updated for some time. This surprises me as I would believe all documents available to the public would be kept up to date. In my opinion it gives a negative impression right from the start to new employees, as you think if such an important document isn’t kept up to date, then what else isn’t?

It refers to IBM as “the values-based enterprise.” And I feel the following quote really helps sum up how you are made to feel working for IBM, that you are fully trusted and a partner of the company, rather than an employee.

“For us, they are not “IBM’s values,” but IBMers’ values. And for the same reason, we see our Business Conduct Guidelines not as a set of rules imposed from above, but as a living manifestation of who we are and what we value—an expression of each IBMer’s personal responsibility to manifest the highest standards of trust, ethics and responsibility in all of our actions and relationships.”

The guidelines are then broken down into the following sections.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section covers being honest and not doing anything you feel uncomfortable with, or something you wouldn’t want published in the news. It also discusses when facing ethical and legal questions, what matters is every client’s success, innervation and trust and personal responsibility in all relationships. All this while obeying the law and acting ethically.

If the guidelines aren’t understood, it is the employee’s responsibility to ask their manager, as violation can result in disciplinary action or dismissal. I feel this is fairly standard documentation, but done in a less formal manner than would normally be expected.

### SPEAKING UP

This is a brief section covering how and who to contact about unlawful activity.

“IBM will promptly review your report of unlawful or unethical conduct, and will not tolerate threats or acts of retaliation against you for making that report.”

I think it is good that they allow you to do this anonymously, as I think more people would be willing to raise their voice when they see something that they don’t agree with without the chance of losing their job.

### In the Workplace

“Your workplace may include working from an IBM location, a client location, or your home. Wherever you are, you will interact with other IBMers, and come in contact with sensitive information, intellectual property, and other valuable assets. Whether communicating in person, over the phone, online, or by any other means or media, the Business Conduct Guidelines apply.”

This section covers the workplace, as says to maintain a healthy, safe and productive environment it should be free of discrimination & harassment, whether based on:

* Race
* Colour
* Religion
* Gender
* Gender identity or expression
* Sexual orientation
* National origin
* Genetics
* Disability
* Age

To avoid these issues, IBM will not tolerate:

* Sexual advances, actions or comments
* Racial or religious slurs or jokes
* Any other comments that creates, encourages or permits an offensive or intimidating work environment.

Other prohibited conduct includes:

* Threats or violent behaviour
* Possession of weapons of any type
* Use of recording devices except as authorized by management
* A manager having a romantic relationship with a subordinate
* Use, distribution, sale or possession of illegal drugs
* Being under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled substances used for non-medical purposes, or alcoholic beverages in the workplace

I find the last point interesting, as they have an onsite pub on the Hursley campus that sells alcohol throughout the day.

The section also covers the protection of IBM’s intellectual property. This is important as from working at IBM, it’s easy to see that a lot of what makes the company valuable is its ideas, as well as its products. If these ideas were passed onto other companies, IBM would have far more competition so inevitably would lose profit.

Other company’s property must also be respected and we must be careful with the software we use, to ensure we don’t break any licensing agreements. There is a regularly updated list of software that we can use on the intranet.

Assets are not considered private in the workplace, so no confidential files should be kept on them, as IBM have the right to monitor personal email accounts and files on them and share found information externally. This is something I haven’t seen before, and am surprised at the lengths they take power over people’s personal belongings when desired, especially with how much data a smartphone can now hold, and the fact that near everyone has one.

### In the Marketplace

As this section largely deals with working with other companies, or selling products to clients, I will not cover it in depth as it is not covered within my role. It largely covers avoiding theft of other’s ideas, how to deal with bribes, how to deal with the public sector and international trade.

### On Your On Time

“Your activities, both on and off the job, can affect IBM’s reputation and business interests.”

This section comments on not assisting competitors or competing against IBM in personal time. This is interesting, as in IBM’s London history, employees have left to create their own company, only to be bought out later by IBM and to move back into their former office.

British Computer Society’s Code of Conduct & Comparison

At first glance the code of conduct for the BCS are a lot shorter than IBM’s, but there are similar phrases throughout.

### Introduction & Breaches of the Code of Conduct

For instance, the following reminds me of the guiding principles section of IBM’s:

“It is expected that these rules and professional standards will be higher than those established by the general law and that they will be enforced through disciplinary action which can result in expulsion from membership.”

The following also reminds me of the same section, as both rely on the employee’s judgement more than going into complex details:

“Members are expected to exercise their own judgement.”

Compared to IBM’s Speaking Up section, BCS’s seems more disciplined:

If a member of BCS should know of, or become aware of, any breach of this Code of Conduct by another member they are under an obligation to notify BCS.

“Under obligation” appears very strict and formal, and it seems to go into far more depth. IBM keeps it lighter, by referring to a separate document if you want to read into the details.

### Public Interest

This section is very similar to IBM’s In the Workplace section covering more or less the same thing, but in my opinion in a shorter and easier to read format. I think IBM goes more into reasons why, where as in this document it is already expected that you understand the reasons why.

### Professional Competence and Integrity

This section again is brief, but also rather general. I could not really find a similar section in IBM’s guidelines, although some of the points, such as rejecting bribes, are covered in different sections. I feel as though all of IBM’s points were well categorised, whereas this sections seems to contain rather separate points, though they do fall under the heading.

### Duty to Relevant Authority & Duty to the Profession

These sections seem to relate to IBM’s In Your Own Time section, but once again covers far less with more general points. It’s as if in comparison this document covers the key points, whereas IBM’s goes into more full depth. It can be argued though that going into more depth means it is less likely to be read, or read carefully, and is not really required to the standard employee.

### Conclusion

I think the main differences between the two documents are shown through the appendix. This makes up almost half the document, clarifying the meanings of certain words. This is a different idea, as it makes the main document quicker to read as mentioned above, and removes interpretation of the rules later on, rather than bulking the main rule set.

I personally think IBM’s looks more professional, but I would think people are more likely to actually read in full the BCS’s code of conduct. In the end, I would imagine the more the business is covered, the more effective the code of conduct is, so because of this I would say that IBM’s is more fit for purpose.

## Relation to routine working practices

My personal routine involves working on my laptop and a virtual machine at Hursley either at home or at Southbank and communicating with team members in the office or over the phone. I attend and hold various meetings to do with my work, these can be with people of different origins in different parts of the world. I am working on certain products that cannot be shared with the public.

As mentioned above, the In The Marketplace section of the IBM code of conduct doesn’t apply to me as a programmer. Of course certain points may do, so it is important to have read through them to be aware, but there’s nothing I would need to keep in mind day to day. However, this area would be extremely important for the majority of staff in Southbank, as the building is vastly dedicated to IBM’s business side with lots of client facing and sales roles.

Due to the secrecy of some of my projects, I know the Intellectual Property section of the rules applies to me, and I can see the importance of why the rule is there. I have also had to be wary with developing my final year project, as initially I looked to patent the idea with IBM which could have caused a confliction of interests as stated in the On Your Own Time section.

The In the Workplace section applies to everyone as far as I can see, as even when you work at home you are having to work with everyone, so you have to be careful with what you say not to upset anyone. This can be tricky at times, as text can be interpreted differently to speech, and sometimes the wrong way. Because of this, we’ve found it best practice to fully introduce to everyone when you get the chance, so they know your character before sending messages, and you know theirs.

I think having worked for IBM now for nearly half a year, the code of conduct is more interesting and means more than it did initially as it can be applied to current knowledge. As a result, I think it is important to review these rules regularly when beginning employment to ensure you are staying within the guidelines and know your rights. For example, I now know IBM has the right to go through my personal phone and email accounts, and by working with them I have granted them that access, which I was not aware of and may have considered differently when using them at work had I known before.

# Impact of Computing

Determine the impact that computing, information systems or digital media have regarding legal, ethical, social and professional issues within IBM and other competitor companies.

## IBM’s History

Text.

## Five Moral Dimensions of the Information Age

Research and understand the “Five Moral Dimensions of the Information Age” (cited above).

## How Large Has the Impact Been?

Text.

# Ethical Dilemmas Encountered

Discuss ethical dilemmas noticed so far working at in the workplace.

## Ethical Dilemmas Encountered

Text.

## Potential Ethical Dilemma

Start thinking about an ethical dilemma that may lead to a “conceptual muddle” and perhaps a “policy vacuum”. Tutor feedback may help you identify a domain of enquiry. Discussion with workgroup colleagues, and possibly your manager, may help.

## Ethical Analysis

Produce an ethical analysis for your chosen “dilemma” from one or more of the “five dimensions” using the following framework from the above source:-

1. Identify and describe the facts as clearly as possible
2. Define the conflict or dilemma and identify (if possible) the higher order values involved
3. Identify the stakeholders as broadly as you can
4. Identify the options that can be reasonably taken
5. Identify the potential consequences of your options
6. Produce an action to improve the situation (Note: 1-5 address the “conceptual muddle”, 6 attempts to fill the “policy vacuum”).

# Professional Guidance

Evaluate sources of professional guidance and compare/contrast to actual practice.

## Relevance of Code of Conduct

Now explore the relevance of your workplace code of conduct, OR the BCS guidelines, OR the ACM code, to the same dilemma or issue as an alternative means of analysis. Compare and contrast the results.

## How IBM’s Code of Conduct Compares with Reality

Text.

## How IBM’s Code of Conduct Contrasts with Reality

Text.

# Ethical Frameworks & Professional Codes of Practice

Evaluate the usefulness of ethical frameworks and professional codes of practice.

## How Are IBM’s Ethical Frameworks Used?

Text.

## How effective are IBM’s Ethical Frameworks

Text.

## Thoughts for improvement

Text.

# Conclusion

## Outcomes of Research

Prepare a critical evaluation of your findings which addresses the objectives set out above. Write a report on the outcomes of the above.

## Outcomes

Text.

**Word Count:** 2249

# Study Plan Calendar

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UWE-FET UFCFE6-15-3 Professional Experience Module Calendar 2013/14 for** *[David Norton]* | | | | | |
| **UWE wk no**. | **Module wk. no.** | **Wk. comm.** | **Study Period (SP)** | **Learning Unit (LU) to be tackled** | **Notes**  **Milestones** |
| 9 | 1 | 23-Sep | Registration leeway period | |  |
| 10 | 2 | 30-Sep |
| 11 | 3 | 07-Oct | **SP1**  **(3 weeks)** |  | Due to course delays and tutors not being assigned, I will spend this time planning the required work **Ends Thu 24 Oct** |
| 12 | 4 | 14-Oct |
| 13 | 5 | 21-Oct |
| 14 | 6 | 28-Oct | **SP2**  **(3 weeks)** | *LU1* | I will complete LU1 and have it pre-marked by my tutor to avoid major mistakes, as I know I have time free over this time. **Ends Thu 14 Nov** |
| 15 | 7 | 04-Nov |
| 16 | 8 | 11-Nov |
| 17 | 9 | 18-Nov | **SP3**  **(3 weeks)** |  | I will likely be too busy with work this SP, but I will plan for LU5 and make contact for collaborative work. **Ends Thu 05 Dec** |
| 18 | 10 | 25-Nov |
| 19 | 11 | 02-Dec |
| 20 | 12 | 09-Dec | **SP4**  **(3 term weeks + 3 optional vacation weeks)** | *LU5* | This SP gives twice the time of the others, so it gives me the best advantage to complete another LU. I have chosen LU5, as it gives me more time to get the collaborative work needed for LU6. **Ends Thu 16 Jan** |
| 21 | UWE vacation | 16-Dec |
| 22 | 23-Dec |
| 23 | 30-Dec |
| 24 | 13 | 06-Jan |
| 25 | 14 | 13-Jan |
| 26 | 15 | 20-Jan | **SP5**  **(3 weeks)** |  | I will keep this SP free for a midway review, to ensure I am keeping up with my targets and deadlines, and adjust my plans if work isn’t being completed as expected .E**nds Thu 06 Feb** |
| 27 | 16 | 27-Jan |
| 28 | 17 | 03-Feb |
| 39 | 18 | 10-Feb | **SP6**  **(3 weeks)** | *LU6* | I will have had plenty of time to get the collaborative work by this SP, so is a good time to complete SP7. **Ends Thu 27 Feb** |
| 30 | 19 | 18-Feb |
| 31 | 20 | 24-Feb |
| 32 | 21 | 03-Mar | **SP7**  **(3 weeks)** |  | I will leave this SP free to plan as I have a holiday booked in this time and don’t want conflictions. **Ends** **Thu 20 Mar** |
| 33 | 22 | 10-Mar |
| 34 | 23 | 17-Mar |
| 35 | 24 | 24-Mar | **SP8**  **(3 weeks)** | *LU9* | Iwill complete the final LU in this SP, as it gives me full advantage of the time made available in the year. **Final deadline Thu 10 Apr 2pm** |
| 36 | 25 | 31-Mar |
| 37 | 26 | 07-Apr |

# Reflective Logbook

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UWE-FET UFCFE6-15-3 Professional Experience 2013-14 Reflective Logbook template** | | |
| **PROLUGUE** | **Student name**: David Norton | **SP #:** SP2 |
| **Employer:** IBM | **Date ending:** 14th November |
| **Tutor name:** Stewart Green | **LU #:** LU1 |
| **Overview:**  I have covered LU1 in this report. It links closely with the Personal Development Plan and Self-Assessment work I have covered at IBM.  It has required me to self-evaluate myself and use my planning skills in order to not let this module to affect my work, or my personal life too heavily. It has also required my research and organisational skills to assemble all the work required into an organised and complete piece. | |
| **PLAN** | I decided to cover LU1 in SP2, as the module was not ready in SP1, and it would give more time to read the module website and handbook to come up with a detailed plan on how I would tackle the required work. My aim was to create a list of objectives that I would like to achieve throughout the year, with a plan on how to tackle each, making them more realistic. I also wanted to make a record of my current achievements with evidence for each one.  As I was working on an important project at work, I had to set strict deadlines to work within to not become swamped. I planned to complete this LU early into SP2 before becoming overloaded. I first read through the handbook and the entirety of the website several times over a week, as planned, and made notes on anything I thought relevant to LU1. I then arranged each point into sections and set deadlines to complete each section by.  To meet certain deadlines quickly, I planned to reuse text in my Personal Development Plan and Self-Assessment Wiki. I still had to research IBM’s organization structure, as I had only focused on how the London office is run. I was able to find this information via Google and using IBM’s private Intranet. It was interesting to see how different IBM runs compared to different companies.  I also spent time considering my current employability skills and the areas I need to improve. I used the ‘Skills Development’ tab on the module website to help me with this, along with many other websites online, as there are many different opinions on which are the most important. | |
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|
| **ACTION** | To track the implementation of my study plan, I have my Calendar printed at home and stuck on the wall, so I can refer to it each day. For this LU, I created a bullet point list of requirements, so as not to miss anything out, and assigned each point with a due date. I will be using this system again for my next LU, as it has worked well, allowing me to constantly review my progress.  I was able to get ahead early having a large amount of the LU already written and having a solid plan to follow. However my time became constrained by work deadlines, I started to fall behind my schedule of having my first draft complete by the end of October. I had planned to dedicate the first weekend in November to catch up, but with the hurricane on the 28th October, I was unable to travel to work, so I utilized my time to complete it early.  During my time at IBM I have learnt to add a contingency plan to anything I work on. Even though I could have fallen behind at this point, I had a week set free before the deadline in which I could recover. This made the experience of falling behind schedule much less stressful. | |
| **REVIEW** | I sent my initial draft to my tutor on the 28th October, leaving over two weeks to receive a response and make relevant changes. This allowed me to fully concentrate on work, taking away pressure early on, giving more time to plan for future LUs. I’m glad I gave such a large contingency time period, as it meant falling behind my deadlines didn’t become a problem.  I feel reusing past work worked extremely well, as it allowed me to complete the LU far earlier than otherwise possible. Having key points noted early also saved me having to reread the large amounts of text available on this module.  It was surprising how focused IBM is towards helping employees gain the skills discussed in this LU, via Giveback opportunities, Personal Development System and many other activities offered. | |
| **REFLECTION** | To improve on the plan I created for the next LU, I will collaborate with other students to see how they interpreted the assigned work to ensure I cover the requirements as fully as possible. I will also dedicate more time to research, as it can be time consuming when having to use referencing.  This LU, along with my work at IBM, has shown me it is important to improve my self-confidence and communication skills. As a result of this, I decided to come back to UWE in November and give a presentation to potential placement students about what a placement is like with IBM.  I am fortunate enough to have already taken on a large project that will be used by large companies, and I’m also glad that I have already been able to form a patent group.  As another result of this module, I have become more inclined to apply for security based events and have attended an Ethical Hacking event at Kings College London, and plan to attend more so that I am able to host the event myself before leaving IBM. | |
| **EPILOGUE** | I am pleased that I was able to meet my deadline without needing to use any of my contingency time. I am also very happy that this LU has got me motivated to achieve my goals, not only by presenting at UWE, but by improving my security and communication skills at a yearlong ethical hacking event.  I will now begin planning my next LU so that I am as well prepared as I was for this one. I will also start collaborating with other students so that I can improve on my next LU and hopefully offer more scope in my report. | |

# References

<https://blackboard.uwe.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/pid-3361362-dt-content-rid-4608093_2/courses/UFCFE6-15-3_13sep_fr_jun14_1/The%20future%20of%20computer%20ethics-You%20ain%E2%80%99t%20seen%20nothin%E2%80%99%20yet%21.pdf>

Moor, J. H. (2001). “The Future of Computer Ethics: You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet!”, Ethics and Information Technology, vol.3, No2, pp. 89-91. (linked above)

<http://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/conduct.pdf>

Tavani, H. T. (2013). Ethics and Technology: Controversies, Questions, and Strategies for Ethical Computing. New York, 4th ed., USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (previous editions are adequate)

A model often used as a framework to encourage debate and policy-making decisions concerning ethical issues is the “Five Moral dimensions of the Information Age”:

* Information rights & obligations
* Property rights
* Accountability
* System quality
* Quality of life (Laudon and Laudon, 2007)

Laudon, K.C. & Laudon, J.P. (2007), Management Information Systems; managing the digital firm; 7th ed, Prentice-Hall.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_3-dZe8ojk>

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## text based

I have split my references into two sections. References 1-9 cover the research I undertook for reflective practice, while 10+ refer to the reading I did on business analysis. The first three references are my own work, where I have recorded my past achievements both for my own benefit and for work.

The following reflective practice references cover a select few websites that cover different personal skills or focus importance in different areas. Many websites are similar, but I felt these each offered something unique. My business analysis covered the organizational structure of the company, its history and the department that I work within.

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3. David Norton (2013 IBM Self-Assessment Wiki Page, personal file [Accessed 23/10/2013]
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