

Professional Ethics

Professionalism in extension

- Agricultural extension and advisory services are dynamic professions
- Extensionists are encouraged to become professionals
- Professional extensionists require a variety of technical and soft skills



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Ethics

Overview

- Study unit 1 is about:
 - The basics of ethics
 - Ethical behaviour in the workplace
 - Importance of ethics
 - Codes of ethics
 - Codes of conduct

What is ethics?

- Ethics are the moral codes or principles that guide behaviour
- The study of ethics is subdivided into several branches ranging from highly theoretical branches to less abstract branches such as applied ethics

What is ethics?

- Applied ethics
 - The application of ethical theories to help choose the most appropriate action given a specific ethical problem in a specific field
 - E.g. environmental ethics, clinical ethics, business ethics, professional ethics

What is professional ethics?

- The ethical values and principles used to make decisions within a professional organisation
- Governs relationships with and responsibilities to colleagues and anyone who uses one's professional services or who these services might affect

Ethics in the workplace

- Ethical behaviour in the workplace will mean:
 - Acting in a way that shows your belief in the basic values of ethical behaviour
 - Conducting your daily activities objectively, uninfluenced by your emotions or personal prejudices

Ethics in the workplace

- Ethical behaviour in the workplace will mean:
 - Providing objective and constructive help or information to all people, regardless of your personal feelings
 - Helping the public understand how they can help achieving objective and ethical behaviour in the workplace

Why is ethics important?



Code of ethics

- Guidelines for behaviour during difficult situations
- General and non-specific
 - Members make independent judgements about most appropriate behaviour in a given situation
- Aspirational standards of behaviour
 - Not necessarily easily measured

Code of ethics

- Importance of a code of ethics:
 - Promotes reputation and enhances trust
 - Encourages and provides guidance for ethical decision-making
 - Makes social integration easier
 - Legitimises ethics

Code of conduct

- Can be used as a legal agreement
- Outlines specific behaviours required or prohibited by the organisation
- Clearly defined and specific
 - No independent judgement of members
- Mandatory set of standards
 - Failure to comply can result in disciplinary action

Code of conduct

- Importance of a code of conduct:
 - Ensures that all the stakeholders are aware of exactly what is expected of them
 - Protects all the stakeholders involved in the organisation and enhances trust
 - Ensures standard behaviour throughout the organisation

Professions and professionals

Overview

- Study unit 2 is about:
 - The definition of profession and professional
 - The characteristics of a profession
 - The qualities of a professional

What is a profession?

- A profession performs an essential service to the public, requires extensive knowledge, is governed by a code of ethics and emphasises close relationships amongst colleagues

Characteristics of a profession

Specialised knowledge
and skills gained
through extensive
education and training

Regulatory bodies that
oversee entry and
compliance

Governed by a code of
ethics or code of
conduct

Some form of
examination,
certification or
licensing requirements

High degree of work
autonomy

What is a professional?

- A professional is a person who is qualified to pursue a certain profession
 - A professional has to meet extensive educational, ethical and regulatory requirements set by their profession before they can provide their service to the public

Qualities of a professional

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- A professional will:
 - Pay attention to detail and take pride in doing a job well
 - Be dissatisfied with substandard results, and will try to put things right as soon as possible
 - Always try to be polite and remain calm when interacting with customers, superiors or co-workers

Qualities of a professional

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- Always be prepared to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them
 - Show respect to those who consult them in a professional capacity
 - Always uphold the reputation of the profession
 - Respect authority and the rules of law when managing or employing others
 - Develop and improve their skills and remain up to date with the latest developments in their field

Professionalism in the workplace

Study Unit 3

Overview

- Study unit 3 is about:
 - Features of professionalism
 - How professionalism is judged
 - Importance of professionalism
 - Basics of personal development
 - Benefits of personal development

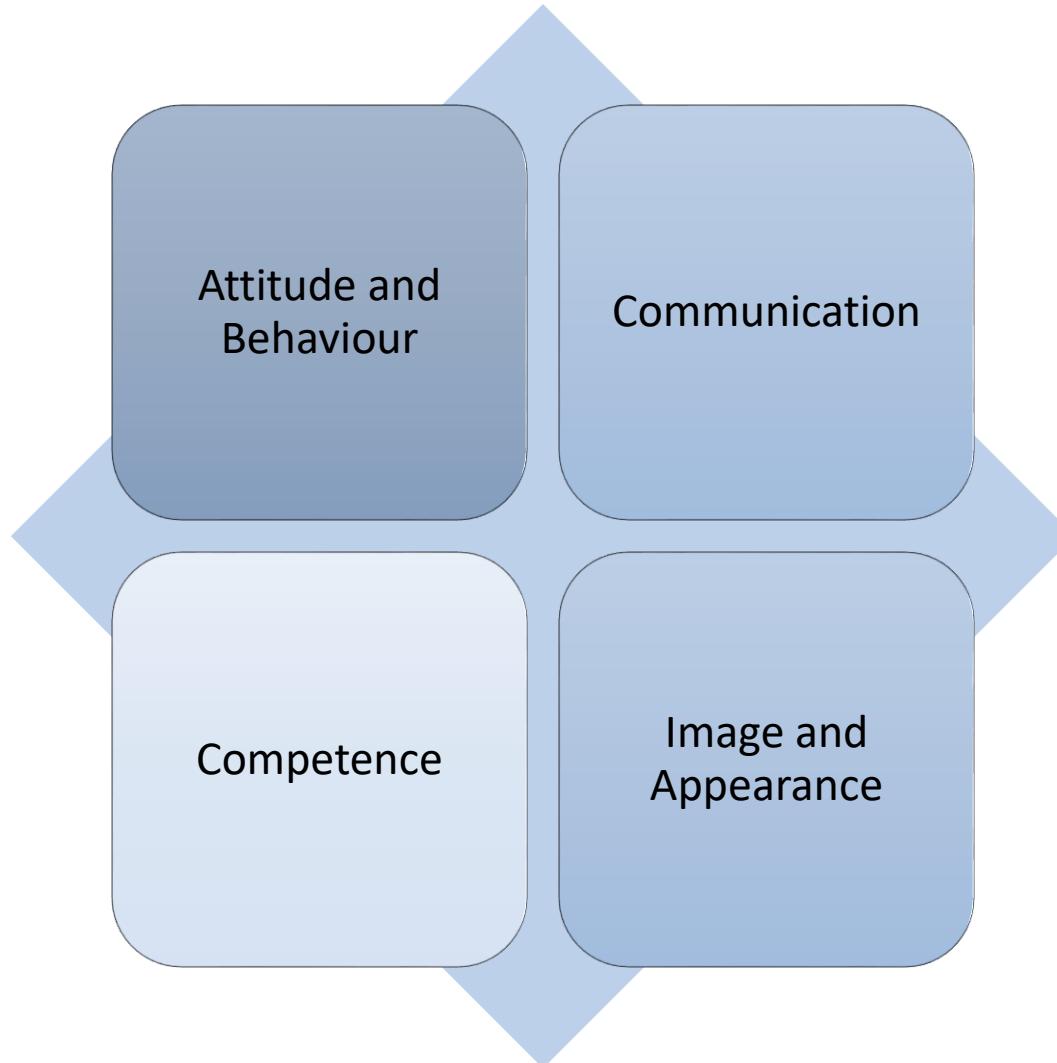
What is professionalism?

- Professionalism is a specific style of behaviour and combination of qualities

Features of professionalism



How is professionalism judged?



Why is professionalism important?

Maintains accountability

- Ensures that organisations take responsibility for their actions no matter what the outcome

Promotes respect

- Ensures that all members are treated with respect, regardless of their background or position

Minimises conflict

- Minimises conflict between members with diverse backgrounds

Establishes boundaries

- Ensures clear boundaries between what is appropriate behaviour and what is not

What is professional development?

- The process of improving and increasing the knowledge and capabilities of already qualified professionals through access to continuous education and training in the workplace

Personal benefits of PD

- Helps to uncover and highlight gaps in your knowledge and skills
- Creates awareness of trends in your profession
- Helps with career development
- Helps you improve your CV, interview skills and future employability
- Improves your professional standing with clients and employers

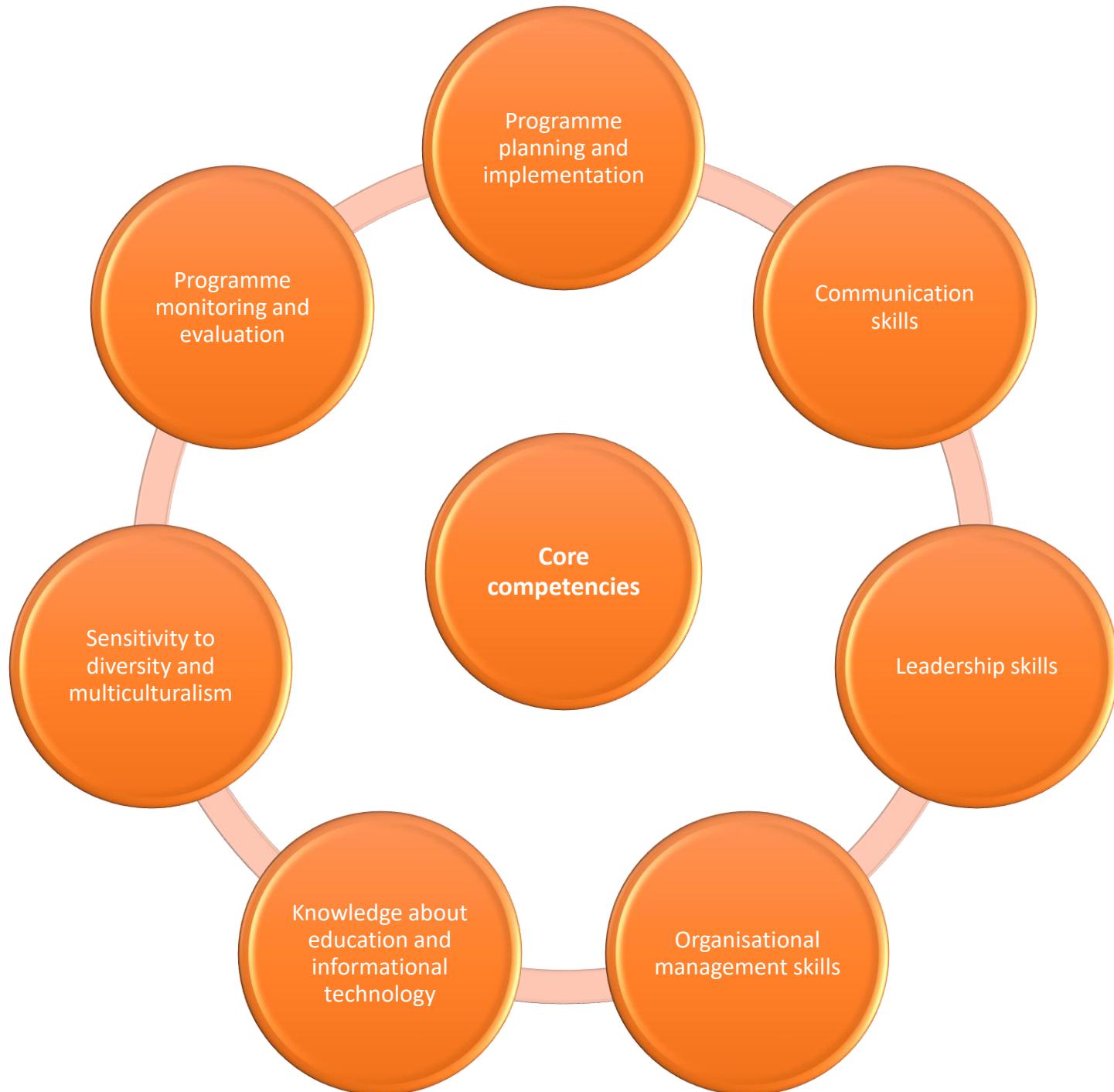
Competencies required by
professional extensionist

Overview

- Study unit 4 is about:
 - The definition of competency
 - Core competencies needed by extensionists
 - Continuous professional development

Competency

- The ability to integrate and apply your knowledge, skills and values to perform the activities required by an occupation to a defined standard
- Core competency
 - Fundamental competencies essential for the success of extension services



Guiding documents

- A constitution
 - Outlines fundamental rules governing the conduct of organisation
- Operating procedures
 - Operational guidelines for the management of the board of directors and various committees within organisation
- Bylaws
 - Regulations that provide a framework for the operation and management of organisation

Bylaws

- Common bylaws of agricultural extension
 - Membership, codes of ethics and conduct, field of practice, discipline
- Some bylaws are in place to help improve the professionalism of their members
 - Continuous Professional Development

What is CPD?

- Continuous Professional Development
 - Internationally recognised method professionals use to maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills
- Different categories of learning activities
- Many CPD activities carry CPD credits

What is CPD?

- Active learning activities involve structured, participation-based study
 - Attending a training course, conference, workshop, seminar, lecture, e-learning course, etc.
- Passive learning activities are less structured
 - Reading relevant news articles, case studies and industry updates and listening to podcasts
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Importance of CPD

- Allows you to stay relevant and up to date with new agricultural technologies and innovations
- Allows you to develop your technical skills
- Allows you to develop important non-technical soft skills you need for agricultural extension
 - E.g. project management, conflict resolution, professional ethics, technical writing