

Profession

Attributes and Ethos

Profession

- A **profession** is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards.
- This group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and is recognized by the public as such.
- A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.

Five Attributes of Profession

1. Systematic body of theory

2. Professional Authority

3. Sanction of the community

4. Regulative code of ethics

5. The professional culture

Five Attributes of Profession:

1. Systematic body of theory

- Distinct body of organized **theoretical knowledge** and **practical skills**
- Adequate **academic training** required: difference between professional and non-professional work skills
- **Advanced professional knowledge** create new area of **specialization and super-specialization.**
- Professionals have to **update their knowledge** regularly.

Five Attributes of Profession:

2. Professional Authority

- Professional **acquire authority** over their clients because of their specialized knowledge.
- Clients have **trust** in the professionals.

Five Attributes of Profession:

3. Sanction of the community

- All professions are **social construct**. Their growth and operation depends upon **community sanctions**.
- Sanction is provided to them as they **serve the society and satisfy some indispensable needs**.
- The community **confers several powers and privileges** on the professionals.

Example: Protection of the confidentiality of communication

Five Attributes of Profession:

4. Regulative code of ethics

- Many a times professionals lose sights of the **professional ideals**. Therefore, all higher professions have **evolved code of ethics**.
- Such codes are **reminders to the members** of their professional duties and obligations.
- Professional ethical codes **informs the public** of the ethical concerns of the profession.
- Such codes create a **climate of trust** between public and professionals.

Five Attributes of Profession:

5. The professional culture

Components of professional culture:

- views on the value and importance of profession
- Elaborate system of inter-group relationships, role definitions and etiquettes

Professional Ethos

- Striving for excellence
- Motivation for service
- Abiding sense of responsibility

Professional Ethos: Striving for excellence

- Mastery of *theoretical knowledge* as well as *practical skills*
- Continuous *upgradation* of such skills
- *Enthusiasm for applying the knowledge* to find *innovative solutions* for challenging problems

Professional Ethos: Motivation for service

- Motivation for service is *intrinsic* to professional work.
- Doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers all dedicate their time and energies to helping other people.
- It is entirely proper that a professional have other goals besides that of service and they should seek an *adequate remuneration*.
- If it seems that one's work is not meeting a real need of other persons, people generally consider it *meaningless* and find it *difficult to be motivated* at all.
- For most people their professional work is, apart perhaps from *raising their children*, their principal mode of *contributing to the good of society* and *making a difference in the world*.

Professional Ethos: Abiding sense of responsibility- Towards the society

- A professional ought to be ever conscious of his or her prime responsibility to use the accumulated wisdom, power and authority, knowledge and skills for
 - for social betterment
 - helping others
 - for advancing human well-being
- A professional is morally responsible for **safeguarding the interests of their clients.**
- Sense of **public service**

Example: Doctors should fight for better healthcare services and engineers for better technology policy.

Professional Ethos: Abiding sense of responsibility- Towards the profession itself

- It includes professional colleagues, other persons related to the profession, professional societies, professional ideals and professional norms and respect for institutions.

What is a professional engineer?

- Has a bachelor's degree in engineering from an accredited Institution.
- Performs engineering work.
- Acts in a morally responsible way while practicing engineering.

The Engineering Profession

- How we view ourselves:
 - Problem-solvers
 - Engineering is enjoyable
 - Engineering benefits people, provides a public service
 - Engineering provides the most freedom of all professions (Florman, 1976)
 - Engineering is an honorable profession

What is Engineering Ethics

- The study of the moral issues and decisions confronting individuals and organizations engaged in engineering.
- The study of related questions about the moral ideals, character, policies, and relationships of people and corporations involved in technological activity.

Ethics and Engineering

- **Impacts of an engineer's ethical decisions:**
 - The Products & Services (safety and utility)
 - The Company and its Stockholders
 - The Public and Society (benefits to the people)
 - Environment (Earth and beyond)
 - The Profession (how the public views it)
 - The Law (how legislation affects the profession and industry)
 - Personal Position (job, internal moral conflict)

Ethics and Engineering

- Typically, good ethical decisions...
 - ...may be just that: “good,” but rarely “great” or “ideal”
 - ...will not always be in the best interest (irrespective of the timeline) of all stakeholders
 - ...are not automatic but require thought, consideration, evaluation, and communication (much like the “design process”).