

Ethical Reasoning Standards- Public Relations Graduates

Definition: Ethical reasoning refers to the ‘reasoning’ process that takes place when determining right from wrong in human conduct. In business contexts ethical reasoning is applied when dilemmas and difficulties arise in practice, particularly when the reputation of an individual or corporation is at risk. In the practice of public relations ethical reasoning involves recognising the ethical dilemma; applying personal values to understand it (including emotional intelligence); referring to ethical theories to assess it; citing industry and work codes to rate it; identifying potential options; considering, weighting and rating options; appraising the impact on reputation; making a decision; monitoring the decision; and evaluating the decision in regard to business reputation and performance.

PR graduates will be able to apply ethical reasoning in a wide range of business contexts

| # | Standards Criteria | Exceeds University and Industry Expectations | Meets University and Industry Expectations | Below University and Industry Expectations |
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| 1 | Recognise Ethical Dilemma RECOGNISE DILEMMA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quickly recognises all dilemmas; knows when things are not right, justifiable or good Aware dilemma could worsen if not addressed Always knows what to do and who to approach when confronted with dilemmas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises most dilemmas; can tell if something is not right, justifiable or good Knows dilemma can worsen if not addressed Generally knows what to do and who to approach when confronted with dilemmas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally knows if something is not right, but cannot explain why; and/or Recognises dilemmas once they are problems; and/or Does not know what to do about dilemmas |
| 2 | Apply Personal Values UNDERSTAND DILEMMA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a genuine person with good ‘ethical compass’ Does the ‘right’ thing by people & community; is moralistic & tolerant Is honest, open and transparent Conducts oneself wisely; has good discretion Is proactive in admitting mistakes Commits to a job and continues until finished Knows what must remain confidential Works for those whose values align with theirs Possesses excellent emotional intelligence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a genuine person with good ‘ethical compass’ Does the ‘right’ thing by people; is moralistic Wants to do the right thing by community Is honest, open and transparent Conducts oneself wisely; has good discretion Makes some mistakes, but keen to improve Commits to a job and continues until finished Is learning what must remain confidential Wants to work for ethical organisations Processes fair to good emotional intelligence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is a genuine person with poor ‘ethical compass’; and/or Tends to be shy, but learning about benefits of being transparent and more open; and/or Has minimal workplace exposure; and/or Is not interested in community issues; and/or Does not always know how to conduct oneself; and/or Is not always aware when mistakes are made; and/or Struggles to commit to jobs and deadlines; and/or Knows ethical organisations are valuable; and/or Is learning about emotional intelligence |

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| | EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify, assess, manage and control own emotions and those of others Uses empathy and compassion to understand how each stakeholder group thinks and feels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can identify, assess, manage and control own emotions and those of others most of the time Uses empathy and compassion to understand how each stakeholder group thinks and feels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot identify and control one's own ; and/or emotions or understand those of others May be empathetic and compassionate, but cannot relate to stakeholders |
| 3 | Refer to Ethical Theories ASSESS DILEMMA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows and embraces all ethical theories; such as virtuous, deontological & consequentialism Applies due consideration to each theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands ethical theories, such as virtuous, deontological and consequentialism and is learning to apply in practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has not learnt ethical theories and struggles to understand their relevance in business practice |
| 4 | Cite Industry and Business Codes of Conduct RATE DILEMMA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to PRIA Code of Ethical Conduct Can write Codes of Ethics for organisations Can write ethical policies for organisations Can write workplace rules; codes of conduct Capable of rating dilemma without input from other people, including management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to PRIA Code of Ethical Conduct Aware organisations should have Code of Ethics Knows where to find ethical policies Adheres to workplace rules and code of conduct Capable of rating dilemma but requires assistance from colleagues and management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is familiar with PRIA Code of Ethical Conduct, but cannot relay its contents; and/or Knows ethics is good for business, but cannot explain why; and/or Requires significant assistance from colleagues to rate dilemmas |
| 5 | Identify Potential Options IDENTIFY OPTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists range of options to solve dilemma Explores each option with reference to personal ethical values, life experience, the PRIA and organisation's codes of ethics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can list range of options to solve dilemma but appreciates input from other people With help, explores each option with reference to own values, life experience, the PRIA and organisation's codes of ethics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires significant input from other people to help clarify options to solve dilemma; and/or More life experience is required to reflect on consequences of each option |
| 6 | Consider, Weigh and Rate Options CONSIDER OPTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details potential outcomes for each option Can explain ethical implications for each option Before making a decision, questions if they can personally live with the outcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With some assistance from colleagues and peers, can explain the potential outcomes and ethical implications for each option | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With significant help from colleagues and peers, can explain the potential outcomes and ethical implications for each option |
| 7 | Appraise Impact of Decision on Reputation REPUTATION IMPLICATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competently rates options in regard to impact on business reputation and performance Confidently details correct course of action Submits potential solutions to management with recommendation Advises management about the right way to do things; such as 'telling the truth' Says 'no' to those who want untruths relayed Accepts that unethical and dishonest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With some assistance from colleagues and peers, can rate options in regard to impact on business reputation and performance With minimal help from peers, can detail correct course of action Submits recommendation to colleagues for checking before submitting to management Is learning to advise others on how to do the right thing; such as 'telling the truth' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires significant assistance from colleagues and peers to explain the impact each option has on business reputation and performance; and/or Requires help in detailing appropriate chose of action; and/or Understands the importance of learning to speak up when things are wrong and unjust; and/or |

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| | | behaviour results in a bad reputation for the organisation, practitioner and PR profession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts that unethical and dishonest behaviour results in a bad reputation for the organisation, practitioner and PR profession | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is aware that unethical and dishonest behaviour results in a bad reputation for the organisation, practitioner and PR profession |
| 8 | Make Decision DECISION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes decision based on good sense of judgement, fully knowing the consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes decision conjointly with colleagues, each fully knowing the consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs help to make a decision and still does not fully understand the consequences |
| 9 | Monitor Decision MONITOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly monitors and reviews decision to determine if dilemma has been resolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors and reviews decision to determine if dilemma has been resolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors decision but cannot confirm if and when dilemma has been resolved |
| 10 | Evaluate Decision EVALUATE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates applied decision-making process to determine if issue could have been resolved more effectively Comfortably leaves employer if asked to partake in unethical work Seeks work in organisations that have similar ethical practices as self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With colleagues, evaluates applied decision-making process to determine if issue could have been resolved more effectively Leaves employer if asked to partake in unethical work Seeks work in organisations that have similar ethical practices as self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With assistance, evaluates applied decision-making process to determine if issue could have been resolved more effectively; and/or Is still learning about ethical codes of conduct and best practice |