ETHICAL DIMENSIONS RUBRIC
Central Connecticut State University

Definition

Ethical Dimensions is a competency that requires reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It may require students to assess their own ethical values, identify ethical principles that guide action, assess the social and political context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, consider how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical issues, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Student's ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.[1]

Framing Language

The Ethical Dimensions rubric is designed to assist faculty in their evaluation of student work on ethics. The rubric requires students to articulate, analyze, and evaluate ethical issues and to defend an ethical position or recommend an appropriate action. This rubric is meant for numerous disciplines and assignment types, thus the requirement for theoretical or conceptual understanding is meant to be broad. While one assignment may merely require a clear understanding and discussion of a legal concept (e.g., when non-disclosure agreements are binding or what constitutes sexual harassment) others may require applying general moral theories (e.g., utilitarianism), comparing different theories, or applying the moral guidelines of a particular profession (e.g., the AMA code of ethics). Theoretical and conceptual understanding is then the identification of the appropriate theories (e.g., utilitarianism, Kantianism, constructivism, behaviorism, etc.), codes or codes of conduct (e.g., the AMA code of medical ethics), frameworks (ethics or process, ethics of policy etc.), principles (e.g., the APAs ethical principles of Psychologists), laws, perspectives, and/or concepts (e.g., justice, equity, human health, plagiarism, intellectual honesty, privacy, disclosure, moral courage, legal classifications, etc.) that are important for evaluating the issue(s).

The rubric focuses on five elements: Description of Ethical Issue(s), Theoretical and Conceptual Understanding, Analysis of the Issue(s), Application of Ethical Theories and Contexts, Defense of an Ethical Position.

Glossary
These definitions were designed to clarify terms used in this rubric only.
Stakeholders: The relevant individuals, groups, organizations, or entities that have an interest in the issue(s).
Ethical Principles: In a broader sense refers to ethical principles, frameworks, codes, theories, laws, concepts, guidelines, or perspectives.

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[1] Adapted from AAC&U Ethical Reasoning VALUE Rubric, https://www.aacu.org/ethical-reasoning-value-rubric.

	Capstone - 4	3 Milestones 2		Benchmark - 1
1. Description of Ethical Issue(s)	Student articulates the issue(s) in detail, including why the issues are relevant and of importance.	Student articulates the issue(s), including why the issues are of importance, so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Student articulates the issue(s), but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Student's articulation of the issue(s) is stated without clarification or description. Student uses biased or unrepresentative language.
2. Theoretical and conceptual understanding	Student thoroughly articulates the aspects of the ethical principles that are important for evaluating the issue(s).	Student discusses the ethical principles that are important for evaluating the issue(s) in a cursory manner.	Student provides minimal discussion of the ethical principles that are important for evaluating the issue(s) or misunderstands several important aspects when doing so.	Student provides minimal discussion of the ethical principles that are important for evaluating the issue(s) and misunderstands several important aspects.
3. Analysis of the Issue(s)	Student demonstrates a clear and thorough understanding of the necessary perspectives or contexts of the issue(s) by including any of the following or similar: identifying the different stakeholders involved, highlighting potential biases involved in framing the issue, recognizing the student's own ethical beliefs or intuitions, recognizing relevant empirical evidence, and including insightful examples.	Student demonstrates some understanding of the necessary perspectives or contexts of the issue(s).	Student demonstrates a very basic understanding of some of the necessary perspectives or contexts of the issue(s) or fails to indicate several of the aspects needed to properly analyze the issue or misrepresents some perspectives or contexts of the issue.	Student includes minimal discussion of the necessary perspectives or contexts of the issue(s) and misrepresents necessary perspectives or contexts of the issue.
4. Application of ethical theories or concepts	Student accurately and thoroughly applies the identified principles to the issue(s).	Student accurately applies the identified principles to the issue(s) but neglects key aspects.	Student applies the identified principles in a cursory or haphazard manner.	Student misapplies the identified principles.

5. Defense of an ethical position	Student clearly and carefully states a position. Student defends their position and/or recommends a realistic action. Statement includes consideration and/or identification of possible objections to the chosen position (e.g., theoretical weaknesses, other possible interpretations of theoretical application, empirical evidence that might challenge the view).	Student states and defends a position throughout the assignment and/or recommends an action and identifies but does not respond to some objections to the stated position.	Student states or defends a position throughout the assignment, and/or recommends an action but the defense is weak, or the student does not identify and respond to objections to the stated position.	Student does not defend the same position throughout the assignment or student's argument in the assignment contradicts the thesis.