

Module 4: Professional Ethics



LECTURER GUIDE

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Module 4: Professional Ethics

Pre-assessment

Answer the following questions without going through the learning content. This is to determine how much you already know of the subject. You will also be asked to complete a post-assessment after you have worked through the learning content.

Question		Self-assessment				
		Low		High		
1	I can explain what the term ethics means.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I understand why ethics are important in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am familiar with a code of ethics and a code of conduct.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am familiar with the terms profession and professional.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I can describe the qualities and characteristics of a profession and a professional.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I understand why professionalism is important in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am familiar with the concept of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I understand why professional development is important for extensionists.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I can describe what skills are needed by extensionists to provide their services professionally.	1	2	3	4	5

Answer: Learner's own answer.

Study unit 1: Ethics

Session 1.1: What are ethics?

Activity 1.1 Individual activity: Ethics in the workplace

1. Fill in the missing words. (8)

The study of ethics is a branch of (a)_____.
Professional ethics is an example of (b) _____ ethics and aims to improve (c)_____. Ethical behaviour can be very important in the workplace. Organisations with a strong commitment to ethics will have increased (d) _____ in the community, mutual (e) _____ between members and improved (f) _____ performance. One of the ways you can ensure that you behave ethically within you organisation is to be (g) _____ and make sure that your emotions or personal (h) _____ do not affect your daily activities.

Answer: a) philosophy, b) applied, c) professionalism, d) credibility, e) trust, f) financial, g) objective, h) prejudices.

Total: 8 marks

Session 1.2: Codes of ethics and conduct

Activity 1.2 Individual activity: Code of ethics or code of conduct

Study the following statements and indicate whether they apply to a code of ethics or a code of conduct or both. (8)

Answer:

1. Becomes a legal agreement once signed.	<i>Code of conduct</i>
2. Legitimises ethics.	<i>Code of ethics</i>
3. Issued by a board of directors.	<i>Both</i>
4. Allows members to make independent judgements about the most appropriate behaviour.	<i>Code of ethics</i>
5. Encourages specific behaviour.	<i>Both</i>
6. A mandatory set of standards that is strictly enforced	<i>Code of conduct</i>
7. Only provides guidelines for behaviour during difficult situations.	<i>Code of ethics</i>
8. Ensures standard behaviour throughout the organisation.	<i>Code of conduct</i>

Total: 8 marks

Activity 1.3 Group activity: Ethical document

Sometimes organisations combine their codes of ethics and conduct to form one general ethics document that includes guidelines for behaviour in a given situation as well as a list of actions that are required or not allowed. Together with two or three of your colleagues, discuss and formulate an ethical document that describes how you would want people to behave should you start an organisation that provides a service to the public.

Answer: Answer may be very general as long as learners demonstrate a clear distinction between aspirational and mandatory standards.

Summative assessment: Unit 1

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Study the following statements and state whether they are true or false. If you answer false give a reason for your answer. (6)

- a. Being ethical is not exactly the same as following the law. (2)

Answer: True (2)

- b. A code of conduct is a document that simply guides ethical decision making in all the members of an organisation (2)

Answer: False (1). A code of ethics simply guides ethical decision making in an organisation. (1)

- c. If an employee signs a code of conduct, they enter into a legal agreement with the employer. (2)

Answer: True (2)

2. Briefly discuss two reasons ethics are important in the workplace. (4)

Answer: Any 2 of the following benefits for 2 marks each:

- *Increases credibility (1): Organisations with a strong commitment to ethics are more respected by the society. (1);*
- *Creates mutual trust between leaders and members or employees of an organisation (1): In organisations that emphasise ethical behaviour, all members in an organisation will work together to achieve a common goal. (1);*
- *Improves decision making (1): An organisation that is driven by strong ethical values will ensure that all the members' decisions are driven by the same ethical standards. (1);*

- *Improves financial performance (1): Organisations that have clearly stated commitments to ethics are more profitable in the long run than those that do not (1).*

3. Codes of ethics and conduct are documents that encourage specific behaviour in an organisation. Discuss the differences between a code of conduct and a code of ethics. (8)

Answer: A code of ethics is simply a set of guidelines for behaviour in a given situation (1) and members use their own judgement as to how they will follow these guidelines (1), whereas a code of conduct is a clearly defined set of requirements about what actions an organisation expects or does not allow (1) and does not allow for any independent judgement of members (1).

A code of ethics represents aspirational standards (1) that members should strive to uphold but that are not necessarily measured (1), whereas a code of conduct represents a mandatory set of standards (1) that is strictly enforced and failure to comply can result in disciplinary action (1).

4. All organisations, no matter their size, can benefit from a code of ethics or a code of conduct. (4)

a. List two benefits of having a code of ethics in place. (2)

Answer: Any of the following 2 benefits for 1 mark each.

- *Promotes reputation and enhances trust;*
- *Encourages and provides guidance for ethical decision-making;*
- *Facilitates social integration; and*
- *Legitimises ethics.*

b. List two benefits of having a code of conduct in place. (2)

Answer: Any of the following 2 benefits for 1 mark each.

- *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; and*
- *Ensures standard behaviour throughout the organisation.*

Total: 22 marks

Study unit 2: Professions and Professionals

Session 2.1: What is a profession?

Activity 2.1 Individual activity: Features of a profession

Using the clues provided below solve the following crossword puzzle. (5)

Down:

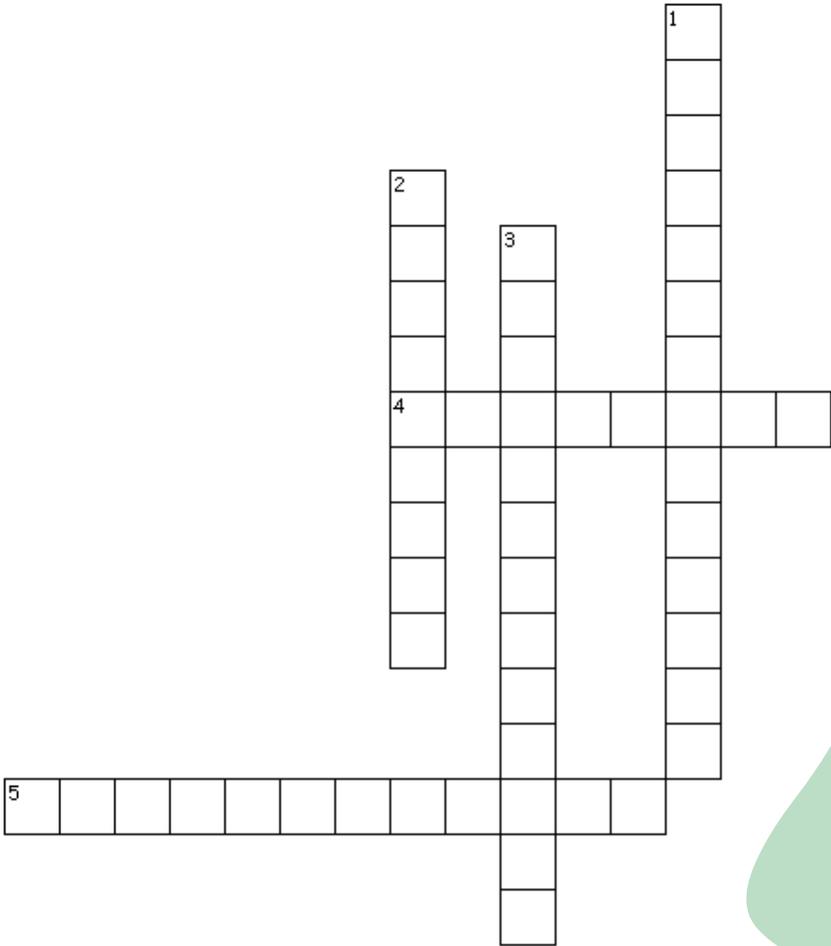
1. An organised association that oversees a profession. (10 letters, 4 letters)
2. Specialised knowledge and skills gained through learning and training. (9 letters)
3. Members of a profession need some sort of _____ before they can perform their service. (13 letters)

Across:

4. Freedom from influence from the public. (8 letters)
5. A set of ethical standards that need to be upheld. (12 letters)

Answer: 1) Regulatory body, 2) Education, 3) Certification, 4) Autonomy, 5) Code of ethics. (5)

Total: 5 marks



Session 2.2: What is a professional?

Activity 2.2 Group activity: Characteristics of professional extensionists

Agricultural extension and rural advisory services are increasingly being recognised as professions. Together with 2-3 of your colleagues discuss what personal characteristics and qualities you think are important for professional extensionists to be successful.

Answer: Answer may be very general as long as learners demonstrate a clear distinction between aspirational and mandatory standards.

Summative assessment: Unit 2

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Explain the following terms using the information you learned during this lesson. (4)

a. Paraprofessional (2)

Answer: A person trained to assist a professional, but not licensed to practice in the profession. (2)

b. Work autonomy (2)

Answer: Freedom from influence or control by the public in the decisions and actions professionals take to perform their service. (2)

2. Briefly discuss three features that all professions have in common. (6)

Answer: Any 3 of the following features for 2 marks each.

- *Professions require specialised knowledge and skills that are gained through extensive education and training.*
- *Professions have regulatory bodies that oversee the entry of new members and ensure the compliance of members with the specific standards and requirements of the specific profession.*
- *Professions are governed by codes of ethics or conduct that ensure members adhere to the ethical standards set by a regulatory body.*
- *Professions have some form of examination, certification or licensing requirements that members have to meet before they can perform the service to the public.*
- *Members of a profession have a high degree of work autonomy in the decisions and actions they take to perform their service.*

3. Why do you think professions and professionals are so important in society? (5)

Answer: The general public do not possess the skills or knowledge on how to do all the things that are vital to our well being (1). We need trustworthy and competent individuals that will be able to help us (1). Professionals possess these essential skills and knowledge that they gained through extensive education and training (1). Professions govern the behaviour (1) of professionals and they ensure that professionals deliver these essential services in line with standards and requirements set by internal regulatory bodies or legislation. (1)

4. List five qualities that successful professionals have in common (5)

Answer: Any of the following 5 qualities for 1 mark each.

- *Always pay attention to detail and will take pride in doing a job well;*
- *Not be satisfied with substandard result, and will seek to put things right as soon as possible;*
- *Always try to be polite and remain calm when interacting with their customers, superiors or coworkers;*
 - *Always be prepared to acknowledge mistakes, learn from them and take appropriate steps to avoid similar mistakes;*
 - *Show respect to those who consult them in a professional capacity;*
 - *Always attempt to uphold the reputation of the profession;*
- *Respect authority and the rules of law when managing or employing others; and*
- *Continuously aim to develop and improve their skills and remain up to date with the latest developments in their field.*

Total: 20 marks

Study unit 3: Professionalism in the workplace

Session 3.1: What is professionalism?

Activity 3.1 Individual activity: Professionalism

Hidden in the block below are seven features of professionalism. After reviewing that part of Session 3.1, see if you can find them. (7)

Answer:

C	O	M	M	U	N	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	U	Z	X	I	D	L	M
O	K	A	Z	P	O	F	F	D	R	O	N	Y	C	W	G	U	K	R	X
Z	C	B	Z	E	B	W	P	N	V	E	D	V	L	E	Q	X	S	V	B
Q	R	Z	Y	Q	G	Z	V	N	I	E	L	S	X	N	U	H	W	P	O
C	B	X	L	P	V	H	O	N	E	S	T	Y	U	G	G	H	O	B	R
F	U	E	C	Z	S	N	T	M	K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E	A	P
C	C	I	N	T	E	G	R	I	T	Y	P	S	W	P	Y	N	E	W	W
Q	T	U	W	I	Z	H	W	O	X	O	L	X	U	Q	N	R	H	F	Y
C	F	D	P	X	S	X	C	O	U	R	T	E	S	Y	Y	E	G	R	J
O	T	R	V	L	P	R	M	U	Z	W	H	G	M	U	S	Y	Z	E	I
G	C	N	H	I	N	O	H	B	O	E	Y	T	C	I	O	E	C	P	K
F	Z	N	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	Q	W	D	C	L	A	H	L	C	P
D	N	N	R	P	W	P	F	T	X	Z	T	O	Y	J	O	L	R	D	C
Q	A	C	L	U	A	C	C	O	U	N	T	A	B	I	L	I	T	Y	S
V	C	M	A	L	F	C	S	Y	K	M	X	R	S	T	A	H	V	J	W
C	N	O	I	B	N	K	W	S	C	W	J	H	F	H	P	Z	R	W	G
G	H	O	K	T	M	N	M	Z	P	T	L	D	H	B	D	P	B	A	B
C	N	F	V	I	S	L	B	E	J	B	W	C	Z	I	B	X	R	V	H
S	K	R	Z	Z	V	P	X	H	V	F	O	S	R	G	G	Q	F	M	X
S	M	C	Y	C	W	T	K	X	M	P	A	E	C	U	A	O	K	S	X

HONESTY
COURTESY
KNOWLEDGE

INTEGRITY
ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPECT
COMMUNICATION

Total: 7 marks

Session 3.2: Professionalism and professional development

Activity 3.2 Individual activity: Professional development

Study the following statements and indicate whether they are true or false. If you answer false, give a reason for your answer.

(8)

1. Professional development is a requirement for membership to certain professional bodies. (2)

Answer: True (2).

2. Professional development occurs strictly through formal training activities. (2)

Answer: False (1). Professional development focuses on experiential learning through formal and informal training activities. (1)

3. Professional development can help you improve your CV and interview skills (2)

Answer: True (2)

4. Participating in professional development is very informal and undocumented. (2)

Answer: False (1). Professional development activities are documented and recognised by professional bodies. (1)

Total: 8 marks

Summative assessment: Unit 3

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. List four of the common features of professionalism. (4)

Answer: Any of the following 4 for 1 mark each.

- *Specialised knowledge and competency;*
- *Honesty and integrity;*
- *Respect and courtesy;*
- *Accountability;*
- *Communication; and*
- *Continuing education and lifelong learning*

2. Discuss two criteria that people frequently use to judge professionalism. (4)

Answer: Any of the following 2 criteria for 2 marks each.

- *Attitude and Behaviour: Your professionalism is firstly judged on how you behave when interacting with others.*
- *Communication: Professionalism can be measured in how well you communicate with others.*
- *Image and Appearance: It may seem superficial but many times professionalism is judged on initial appearances.*
- *Competence: Most of all professionalism is judged on whether you can competently deliver the services or skills that you claim you can.*

3. List four reasons professionalism is important in the workplace. (4)

Answer: Maintains accountability (1), Promotes respect (1), Minimises conflict (1) Establishes boundaries (1).

4. Professional development can include formal and informal training activities. List three examples of professional development activities. (3)

Answer: Any of the following 3 for 1 mark each.

- *Attending a conference or training workshop;*
- *Completing an online course hosted by a institution of higher learning;*
- *Shadowing or assisting an experienced colleague;*
- *Temporary job swaps within the organisation;*
- *Learning from coaching, mentoring or teaching; and*
- *Reading about new technologies, methods or legislation in your field.*

5. Discuss two personal benefits of professional development. (4)

Answer: Any of the following 2 benefits for 2 marks each.

- *Professional development activities can help you uncover and highlight gaps in your knowledge and skills that you might not have been aware of.*
- *Participating in professional development activities can make you aware of trends in your profession and can help you with your career development.*
- *Many professional development activities help you to improve your CV or interview skills, which can greatly improve your future employability.*
- *Professional development activities can also improve your professional standing with clients and employers.*
- *Finally well-chosen, self-directed professional development activities can help you to have a fulfilling and rewarding career.*

Total: 19 marks

Study unit 4: Competencies required by professional extensionists

Session 4.1: Core competencies required by extensionists

Activity 4.1 Individual activity: Core competencies

Draw a line to match the core competencies listed in column B to the statement in column A. (6)

Column A	Column B
1. Listening to the clients needs.	a. Program monitoring and evaluation.
2. Promote the use of ICTs.	b. Sensitivity to diversity and multiculturalism.
3. Report to stakeholders whether extension programs have been successful.	c. Communication
4. Value the diverse backgrounds of the extension audience.	d. Organisational management
5. Mobilise and monitor their resources effectively.	e. Education and information technology.
6. Effectively lead, coordinate and facilitate different stakeholders.	f. Leadership

Answer: 1c, 2d, 3a, 4e, 5b, 6f. (6)

Total: 6 marks

Session 4.2: Important bylaws for professionalism

Activity 4.2 Group activity: CPD bylaws

Most professional organisations have CPD requirements. Together with 2 - 3 of your colleagues identify professional extension organisations or any other professional organisations in your community, investigate their CPD requirements and answer the following questions.

1. Does the organisation have a CPD bylaw?
2. What are the CPD requirements?

Answer: Answer may be very general as long as learners demonstrate a clear distinction between aspirational and mandatory standards.

Summative assessment: Unit 4

Theoretical assessment

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Explain the following terms in relation to the information you have just learned. (8)

- a. Constitution (2)

Answer: The fundamental rules governing the conduct of the organisation. (2)

- b. Bylaw (2)

Answer: Regulations that provide a framework for the operation and management of the organisation. (2)

- c. Continuous Professional Development (2)

Answer: An internationally recognised method professionals use to maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills. (2)

- d. Competency (2)

Answer: The ability to integrate and apply one's knowledge, skills and values to perform the activities required by an occupation to defined standard. (2)

2. Using examples, briefly describe the difference between technical competencies and process skills. (4)

Answer: Technical skills and competencies include subject matter specific skills. (1) Example: Any relevant example of a technical skill e.g. knowledge about soil management or pest management (1).

Soft skills or process skills help extension workers perform their tasks well. (1) Example: Any relevant example of a soft skill e.g. communication skills, organisational skills (1)

3. Why is continuous professional development important for professional extensionists? (4)

Answer: CPD allows extension agents to stay relevant and up to date with new agricultural technologies and innovations. (1) CPD allows for the development of technical and non-technical soft skills required for agricultural extension. (1) In an agricultural environment that is changing faster and faster, it is important for professional extension agents to develop skills to meet their clients changing needs. (2)

4. Discuss three core competencies needed by professional extensionist. (6)

Answer: Any of the following 3 competencies for 2 marks each.

- *Programme planning and implementation: An extension agent needs to be able to plan an extension programme to the last detail. They also have to be able to help their clients to do and use meticulous planning;*
- *Communication: Good communication skills are the most important skills in extension. Extensionists have to be able to effectively communicate agricultural innovations to clients but also effectively listen to their needs. Extension agents should also be able to communicate confidently with other stakeholders such as investors or government officials;*
 - *Leadership: Extensionists have to be able to effectively lead, coordinate and facilitate different stakeholders involved in the agricultural extension environment;*
 - *Organisational management: Professional extensionists need to have excellent organisational skills and be able to mobilise and monitor their resources effectively;*
- *Programme monitoring and evaluation: There is always competition for resources in the agricultural extension environment. An effective extension agent will need to be able to monitor and evaluate the success of extension programmes in order to avoid previous mistakes and to report to stakeholders whether programs have met the desired effects;*

- *Sensitivity to diversity and multiculturalism: Many extension agents will work in developing countries with many races, religions and ethnicities. Professional extensionists have to be familiar with these diversities and value the diversity of their audience; and*
- *Education and informational technology: Information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as mobile phones and tablet computers, are becoming very important in agricultural extension. These ICTs are an effective way to communicate with a large number of users and extension professionals should ensure that they are familiar with them. They should also try to encourage their clients to use these ICTs.*

Total: 22 marks

Post-assessment

The post-assessment is to be done once you have read through the module and completed all the activities. Compare your answers to those in the pre-assessment to identify where knowledge has been gained and where improvements can be made. Rate your knowledge on the topics on a scale of 1 to 5 by circling the corresponding number.

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		Low		High		
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3	I am familiar with a code of ethics and a code of conduct.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am familiar with the terms profession and professional.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I can describe the qualities and characteristics of a profession and a professional.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I understand why professionalism is important in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am familiar with the concept of professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I understand why professional development is important for extensionists.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I can describe what skills are needed by extensionists to provide their services professionally.	1	2	3	4	5