

Ethical Decision Making



PennState

**Gather
the Facts**
(including laws,
regulations, policies,
and procedures)

**Explore
Possible
Solutions
and
Actions**

**Determine
the
Ethical
Issue(s)**

**Take
Ethical
Action**

**Identify
Those
Impacted**

**Consider
Ethical
Principles,
Responsibilities,
and *Penn State*
Values**



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Ethical Decision Making Model

Guiding Questions

Gather the Facts

- What are the important questions to ask?
- What facts do we know as opposed to opinions we may hold?
- Who may be more knowledgeable whom we can ask for more information?
- What do current PSU policies and procedures have to say about this (University, college, campus, unit, student, academic, etc.)?
- What legal obligations and rights are involved?
- Are there any legal implications?

Determine the Ethical Issue

- What personal or group biases may be impacting how I/we view this?
- What words or ideas have multiple or different meanings for different people that we need to clarify (e.g., fairness, justice)?
- What ethical values may be involved?
- What moral feelings or judgments does this situation bring out of me or others?

Consider Ethical Principles, Responsibilities and Penn State Values

- How does this situation relate to our Mission as a University?
- What are the rights, duties, and ethical obligations of everyone involved?
- Are there particular professional responsibilities or obligations that I must uphold?
- What important or relevant relationships do we have that we must honor or consider?
- What Penn State Values are relevant to this situation?

- Do any Penn State Values conflict with each other? How do we resolve this?
- What does our commitment to Penn State Values suggest we do?
- How do our actions and possible decisions reflect Penn State Values?

Identify Those Impacted

- Who will be directly impacted by our decision?
- How may this situation and/or our decision impact others outside of the immediate situation?
- Have we consulted with those who will be impacted by this?
- Have we considered other diverse voices and alternative viewpoints?

Explore Possible Solutions and Actions

- Think creatively about possibilities and ethical solutions
- What strategies may prevent this issue in the future?
- What are the potential consequences (intended and unintended) of each solutions?
- How will the final decision be communicated and evaluated?
- How does each possible solution:
 - Reflect the Mission of the University?
 - Embody Penn State Values?
 - Model the actions of an ethical leader?
 - Establish a precedent for future situations?
 - Impact all parties involved?
 - Address the moral feelings and judgments we had?