

# Course 7

## Values duty- based ethics in university

Duty-based ethics teaches that some acts are right or wrong because of the sorts of things they are, and people have a duty to act accordingly, regardless of the good or bad consequences that may be produced.

Some kinds of action are wrong or right in themselves, regardless of the consequences.

Deontologists live in a universe of moral rules, such as:

- It is wrong to kill innocent people
- It is wrong to steal
- It is wrong to tell lies
- It is right to keep promises

Someone who follows Duty-based ethics should do the right thing, even if that produces more harm (or less good) than doing the wrong thing:

### **Moral rules must be universalisable**

The first one emphasises the need for moral rules to be universalisable.

Always act in such a way that you can also will that the maxim of your action should become a universal law.

To put this more simply:

Always act in such a way that you would be willing for it to become a general law that everyone else should do the same in the same situation.

This means at least two things:

- I can't claim that something is a valid moral rule and make an exception to it for myself and my family and friends.

So, for example, if I wonder whether I should break a promise, I can test whether this is right by asking myself whether I would want there to be a universal rule that says 'it's OK to break promises'.

Since I don't want there to be a rule that lets people break promises *they* make to *me*, I can conclude that it would be wrong for me to break the promise I have made.

- if the ethical rule you claim to be following cannot logically be made a universal rule, then it is not a valid moral rule.

### **Moral rules must respect human beings**

Act so that you treat humanity, both in your own person and in that of another, always as an end and never merely as a means.

### **University values**

The Université community is guided by a clear and ambitious vision : for an intensive research university, whose activities supporting education, research and the sharing of knowledge are developed at the best level, serving society.

As a public university reporting reports its activities independently, focuses its strategy and resources to ensure the highest service to its students, the academic community and society at large.

### **Values**

In a changing world, Université aims to build a unique university community by developing strong values.

## **Freedom of thought**

This value is at the core of the university's activities. Whether in teaching or research, it aims at developing critical thinking, curiosity and creativity in all fields of study.

## **Service to society and general-interest mission**

The university contributes to understanding and solving major global issues. Its research strategy focuses on interdisciplinary projects. Its training strategy is intended to prepare students for rich and relevant professional and personal careers in the context of a changing society and business world.

## **Opening up to the world, the city and the local environment**

The university's ambition for international excellence is paired with a strong commitment to monitoring its impact on its national and local environments., the university encourages its staff to work for and with their surrounding human resources strategy for researchers by applying for the Excellence in Research

## **Respect for Respect and promotion of equal rights**

They are reflected in strong commitments in terms of social dialogue, for personal and professional wellbeing, the fight against discrimination in general and gender equality. The university has an [Equality Mission](#) whose objective is to define the framework for the equalities policy, to promote, coordinate and enhance actions in favour of equalities for staff and students.

University has implemented specific measures as part of its [disability policy](#) to welcome and support students and staff with disabilities throughout their academic and professional careers.

## **Scientific integrity**

At a time when science is the object of both considerable hopes and strong

distrust, University must be beyond reproach in its dedication to rigorous scientific practices, integrity and transparency. The establishment of a committee on ethics and scientific integrity in the university statutes is an institutional response to this commitment.

## **General Values**

Your values are the things that are important to you. They often take on short labels such as: family, friendships, education, personal or professional development.

There are many reasons why knowing your values can be important. Firstly, by explicitly having stated your values you can assess whether you are spending time and making decisions in accordance with what you find important.

The decisions your values inform will vary in size and complexity. For example, what to do with free time, whether you should prioritise your family over your friends or vice versa, or even whether to work for a company as their values may or may not align with yours. Therefore it can also be very helpful to rank your most important values so that you have a general idea of what to do if you are faced a dilemma of choosing between two things that are important to you. The context will always be important, but your values can provide you guidance and a starting point.

One important thing to remember is that values will change naturally over time, and therefore even if we decided on aspects of our lives according to our values five years ago, it might not be the right thing for us now. Therefore it is important to actively reflect and challenge our values and habits.

It can be useful to track how you spend your time and see if it matches your values, for example if friends are important for you, do you show that in your actions?

## **How to identify personal values**

There are many different approaches you can use to identify your personal values. Whichever you choose it can be helpful to set aside a period of undisturbed time when you are fully focused on the task. Two example approaches are provided below.

### **Ask yourself questions**

One of the easiest ways to identify values is to ask yourself questions like:

- What is important to me?
- What would a perfect day look like? What values are represented in this choice?
- What do I spend my free time on?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- What would I do if there were no limitations?

It can then be helpful to review your answers, consider what values these may represent, and capture all the values on a list.

Once you have a list it can be beneficial to rank your top 5 or top 10 and save it for reference. If you don't find it easy to rank your values, you can start by trying to identify those at the top of your list by asking yourself questions like 'If I could only have one of these two things in my life, which would I choose?'

### **Use a word list and narrow it down.**

This particular approach is adapted from TapRoot's core value identification activity, with the goal of finding your five core values.

**Step 1:** From the following list choose and write down values that resonate and are important to you. There is no need to overthink it, but try to be selective so you don't end up with all of the values on the list. You will likely find that most of the values have some importance to you, so make sure you ask yourself 'Why this one?' to choose only essential values. If you have a value that is important to you but does not appear on the list, write that one down too.

- |                |                |                     |                 |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Abundance      | Decisiveness   | Joy                 | Proactivity     |
| Acceptance     | Dedication     | Kindness            | Professionalism |
| Accountability | Dependability  | Knowledge           | Punctuality     |
| Achievement    | Diversity      | Leadership          | Relationships   |
| Adventure      | Empathy        | Learning            | Reliability     |
| Advocacy       | Encouragement  | Life-long learning  | Resilience      |
| Ambition       | Engagement     | Love                | Resourcefulness |
| Appreciation   | Enthusiasm     | Loyalty             | Responsibility  |
| Attractiveness | Ethics         | Making a difference | Responsiveness  |
| Autonomy       | Excellence     | Mindfulness         | Security        |
| Balance        | Expressiveness | Motivation          | Self-control    |
| Being the best | Fairness       | Optimism            | Selflessness    |

Benevolence	Family	Open-mindedness	Simplicity
Boldness	Friendships	Originality	Stability
Brilliance	Flexibility	Passion	Success
Calmness	Freedom	Performance	Teamwork
Caring	Fun	Personal development	Thankfulness
Challenge	Generosity	Proactive	Thoughtfulness
Charity	Grace	Professionalism	Traditionalism
Cheerfulness	Growth	Quality	Trustworthiness
Cleverness	Flexibility	Recognition	Understanding
Community	Happiness	Risk taking	Uniqueness
Communication	Health	Safety	Usefulness
Commitment	Honesty	Security	Versatility
Compassion	Humility	Service	Vision
Cooperation	Humour	Spirituality	Warmth
Collaboration	Inclusiveness	Stability	Wealth
Consistency	Independence	Peace	Wellbeing
Contribution	Individuality	Perfection	Wisdom
Creativity	Innovation	Playfulness	Zeal

Credibility	Inspiration	Popularity
Curiosity	Intelligence	Power
Daring	Intuition	Preparedness

**Step 2:** Group the values into at most five categories/groupings in a way that make sense to you. For example, if you selected the values flexibility and open-mindedness, these might be grouped together as they both have something to do with change. However, it is only important that the groupings make sense for you.

**Step 3:** Now that you have five groupings, choose one value from each group that functions as an overall label for the group (or make up a label if one value does not stand out). For instance, if you have grouped ‘balance’, ‘health’, ‘personal development’, ‘wellbeing’ and ‘spirituality’ – the label may end up being ‘wellbeing’.

Now you have five core values (or value groups) with a series of important values embedded within these.

**Step 4:** You can stop the exercise there, or you can choose to add a verb to each of the core values to make it actionable. For instance, to make ‘wellbeing’ from the above example an actionable value statement, you might make it the actionable value ‘Promote wellbeing’.

**Step 5:** Now challenge yourself to order the core values from most important to least important. Write the prioritised list.

Now you have a list that you can return to for reference when making future decisions.



**One challenge** with this approach is that it might not support you to make decisions within a value grouping. For example, if you had to choose between supporting a friend or a family member, and both friendships and family are in the same grouping this method might not help you.

Therefore it can be helpful to make a prioritised list directly from the set of values without grouping them. The questions in the example ‘Ask yourself questions’ above may be useful to judge the relative importance of the values.