

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, PUNE
(An Autonomous Institute of Government of Maharashtra)
Affiliated to University of Pune
End Semester Re-Examination
(ML 101) Professional Ethics and Human Values
Semester - I

Programme: F.Y. B. Tech
Academic Year: 2013-14
Duration: 3.0 Hours

Divisions: VI, VII, VIII, IX, X

Max. Marks: 60

Instructions:

1. **Read and understand the question paper and all instructions in it before answering**
2. **Attempt BOTH sections of the paper**
3. **Figures to the right indicate full marks**
4. **Begin each answer on a fresh page. Neatness will be rewarded**
5. **Mobile phones are not permitted in the examination hall**

SECTION – I

Answer any TWO questions in this section

Q1. Carefully, read the case given below and answer the questions that follow:

The Case of the Pandora's Box

It was about a year ago that I first saw it in a corner of the Boat Club Canteen at CoEP. It was a large wooden drop-box with a tag that announced that *SWaCH Pune Seva Sahakari Sanstha Ltd.* had placed it there for collecting e-waste. The lock was broken, and when I opened the shutter, it turned out to be a veritable 'Pandora's Box' from which tumbled out broken badminton racquets, old thermocole sheets, and almost anything, *but* electronic waste!! I asked people around me – students, teachers, almost anybody I met – whether they knew what the box was for. None really knew or cared, and apparently, neither did the people at SwaCH, because they had never bothered to educate us about e-waste disposal, nor even cared to clear the box periodically to follow up on their laudable project. I called up SWaCH many times requesting them to pay a visit to our college, and make a presentation on the subject, at least to the First Year students for whom the hazard of e-waste forms part of the syllabus of *Professional Ethics*. Each time I called, the response was evasive.

This problem was also recently discussed at a guest speaker's interaction as part of the *Professional Ethics* course. Coincidentally, the feedback, somehow, also reached the people at SwaCH, and the very next day, when their representative visited the campus, I explained the situation to her. She was enthusiastic, and promised to do something. She even asked for and was given a stall at the Mind Spark Festival to help her spread awareness among the students and others. Unfortunately, the footfall at her stall was almost zero. Nevertheless, the representative and I decided that we could discuss how, in the long run, our students also could help in awareness creation by taking it up as a project. However, when it came to actually doing something about the problem, it was the same old story, and the representative was not available even on the phone!

So where do we go from Square One? Is this the end of the road? NEVER!! We must urgently find a way out of this apathy for something so important. All of us need to spread awareness about the danger of unscientific disposal of even something as seemingly innocuous as used battery cells, which we so carelessly throw into the dustbin.

Questions

- (a) Explain briefly what you, as a student of *Professional Ethics*, have learnt about the hazard of electronic waste. Also explain what should be the role of groups like SWaCH in the disposal process. (5 marks)
- (b) What steps would you take (or have already taken) to ensure that SWaCH effectively performs its role of educating people and ensuring that better quality e-waste collection boxes are placed at and periodically cleared from various places in the campus? Suggest such places for easy visibility of the boxes.(5 marks)
- (c) What initiative would you take to spread awareness of e-waste disposal and carry on the work on a long term basis? Think of the various difficulties and obstacles you might face in bringing about a change, and explain how you would be committed to succeed in your mission. (5 marks)

Q2. Read the case narrated below and answer the questions that follow:

One of the top ten engineering institutes in the country, the Model College of Technology (MCT) sets and maintains very high standards over a number of excellent UG and PG programmes delivered to students from home and abroad. Still, MCT's Principal is a worried man. Although his students have brought academic laurels to the college, he sometimes wonders how committed many of them may be to their role as students of a professional institute. He notes with concern that they often cut classes, en masse, especially on days just before or after a long weekend or festival break. He knows and empathises that students staying away from their parents get homesick. But he also strongly believes that in the process of growing into young adults and ultimately into professionals, students must develop a responsible work ethic with the right values to guide them. Therefore, he feels let down, when students leave the hostel without permission and the teachers wait in empty classrooms for them. There have even been instances of students "bunking" lectures after arranging, with a collaborating friend, to answer their attendance by proxy.

MCT even introduced a course in Value Education for the first year students. But the commitment to it was only marginal. The sole objective of many students seemed to be to get past the course using any means, ethical or unethical. When a home assignment in this subject needed students to find answers to questions through reference work, many resorted to blind copying from others or from the internet. Apart from showing lack of commitment, these students did not even add value to their own knowledge by doing this. When asked why he had copied blindly, one student retorted quite casually, "How else will I score more marks?" Another student was overheard telling his friends, "Seriously, Value Education is a useless subject. Aren't we all grown-ups? We don't need someone to tell us what is good and what is bad or what our social responsibilities are. This is the most stupid subject I have studied in my whole life!"

Questions

- (a) Analyse the above case from a student's view point to suggest the possible reasons for the decline in values among today's youth. You may base your arguments on the various ethical concepts you have learnt. (7 marks)
- (b) What will you suggest to the Principal of MCT to help him deal effectively with his dilemma? (8 marks)

Q3. Read the case narrated below and answer the questions that follow:

A junior member of staff has just returned to work after taking special leave to care for her elderly mother. For financial reasons she needs to work full-time. She has been having difficulties with her mother's home care arrangements. Therefore, she has often been leaving office early to attend to her personal commitments. Consequently, she has had to miss a number of meetings even after returning from leave. She is very competent in her work, but her absences are putting pressure on her already overworked colleagues. This does not mean that she herself does not feel the pressure of accumulating workload and meeting deadlines. She does, but she is torn between her commitments to her job and old mother.

You are her manager, and you are aware that the work flow is getting hampered by her frequent absences. You and the entire team are working under tremendous pressure to meet deadlines and show results in time. Other employees have begun complaining about the increased workload which they are unable to handle. In fact, one of her male colleagues is beginning to make comments such as "a woman's place is in the home", and is undermining her at every opportunity. All this is putting her also under a lot of stress.

As a manager of the organization, you must maintain certain work ethics, while at the same time, be fair to and straightforward with every employee. You also owe a duty of confidentiality to the staff involved, which prevents you from disclosing the lady's personal problems that bring down her efficiency at work.

Questions

- (a) Do you think the male colleague's remarks that *a woman's place is in the home*, are insulting to women? Why? Can this be a case of sexual harassment of the junior member of staff? Give reasons why you feel the way you have answered, but do also remember that the lady has serious household problems. (5 marks)
- (b) You have a dilemma that needs you to decide whether the employees' personal problems or completing work in time, is more important. If you were the lady employee's manager, how would you proceed so as not to discredit yourself, your profession, each member of your staff, and the organization for which you all work? (5 marks)
- (c) Assuming that you are the lady employee in this case, how would you solve your dilemma of satisfying your commitments to both, your mother as well as the work you are paid to do? (5 marks)

SECTION - II

Answer any **THREE** questions in this section

Q4. In the statements below, fill in the blanks with suitable words from those given in brackets: (10 marks)

1. _____ (*simple/ intermediate/ high*) technology is suitable for _____ (*large/ small/ micro*) scale production of goods, employing _____ (*antiquated/ sophisticated/ obsolete*) machines and equipment.
2. The use of plastic bags is environmentally _____ (*sustainable/ preferable/ unsound*) because they are _____ (*convenient/ bio-degradable /non-biodegradable*)
3. _____ (*high/ appropriate/ nuclear*) technology uses only locally available resources for manufacture of goods.
4. Over the centuries, the toxicity of e-waste _____ (*is lost/ remains present/ gets neutralized*) compared with toxicity of nuclear waste.
5. Mass production is highly _____ (*labour/ material/ capital*) intensive and uses _____ (*high medium/ intermediate*) technology.
6. Appropriate technology is relatively _____ (*complicated/ hazardous/ easy*) to operate and can be maintained by _____ (*less/ highly/ specially*) skilled persons.
7. Moral dilemmas arise because of one's _____ (*difficulty/ ease/ reluctance*) in deciding the action to take when there is a _____ (*clash/ agreement/ excitement*) of different moral values.
8. Appropriate technology is an _____ (*eco-friendly/ ecologically damaging/ environmentally unsustainable*) technology
9. MNCs do business in their _____ (*home/ host/ hostage*) countries because labour is expensive in their _____ (*home/ host/ hostage*) countries.
10. _____ (*mass/ batch/ manual*) production is large scale _____ (*manufacture/ distribution/ consumption*) of goods, by _____ (*sophisticated/ simple/ inexpensive*) machines and equipment using high technology.
11. The technology of mass production requires _____ (*high/ low/ medium*) investment to install.

Q5. Define and explain the meaning of *Ethics*. Explain, with examples, the distinction between *Ethics*, *Morals* and *Human Values*. (10 marks)

Q6. *Technology can have no legitimacy unless it inflicts no harm*. Explain, with examples this statement in the context of the need for *Ethics* in practising the engineering profession. (10 marks)

Q7. What are *intellectual property rights*? Why is it unethical to use or copy software for which one has not paid? (10 marks)

Q8. What kind of technology is used for large scale manufacture of goods? Do you believe that employing such technology is suitable for a country with a large population like India? Why or why not? (10 marks)

Q9. Write short notes on any *TWO* of the following:

- (a) *Gender Diversity*
- (b) *Intellectual Property Rights*
- (c) *Computer Crime*