

## **Ethical Analysis Framework**

*General comments: This is not necessarily a linear process, even though the steps are numbered. For example, thinking about consequences may lead you to come up with a new possible policy, which would need to be included in the list in step 2 and in subsequent analysis steps. Also, in each step, you may want to include questions that aren't answered by your current sources (to be further researched).*

1. **Identify the relevant facts** (past and future, known and deduced).
  - a. Provide a comprehensive list of facts that are or may be relevant.
2. **Identify the possible policies.**
  - a. Generate a broad set of reasonable alternative policies. (Think broadly!)
  - b. Who is making the decisions?
  - c. Who are the stakeholders affected by the policies?
3. **Analyze each policy.**
  - a. For each policy, impartially and simultaneously consider both deontological and consequential points of view.
  - b. Does the policy pass the tests of fairness and justice? Are some individuals deprived of their rights at the expense of others? Does it make a reasonable *universal* policy?
  - c. Reject any policies that are *prima facie* excessively unethical, unfair, or unjust.
4. **Identify the principles and values.**
  - a. What are the goods to be protected or the rights of the individuals involved?
5. **Identify the consequences** (known or potential, positive and negative).
  - a. Consider the consequences of each policy, with respect to each group of stakeholders.
6. **Identify the applicable laws.**
  - a. Do they require or prohibit any actions by the individuals involved?
7. **Identify and analyze the tradeoffs.**
  - a. Consider each policy with respect to principles that are in conflict.
  - b. Analyze the “goodness/harm ratio” – how much positive benefit is created for how many people, relative to the negative consequences?
8. **Analyze the ethical issues with respect to the laws.**
  - a. Are the relevant laws consistent or inconsistent with the ethical tradeoffs?
9. **Analyze the ethical issues with respect to the relevant professional code(s) of ethics.**
  - a. Is the professional code consistent or inconsistent with the ethical tradeoffs?
10. **Draw and justify a conclusion.**
  - a. What action *should* be taken, based on the policy that is the most ethical (most fair/just/happiness-maximizing) of the available options?
  - b. If this action is inconsistent with the applicable laws, then your conclusion may include a recommendation that the law should be changed.
11. **Write a cogent summary of your analysis and reasoning.**
  - a. The written analysis all of the information that you collected/created during the first ten steps of the process.

## Ethical Analysis Framework Quick Reference

1. Identify the relevant facts
2. Identify the possible policies, decision makers, and stakeholders
3. Analyze each policy; reject if *prima facie* unethical
4. Identify the principles and values
5. Identify the consequences
6. Identify the applicable laws
7. Identify and analyze the tradeoffs
8. Analyze the ethical issues with respect to the laws
9. Analyze the ethical issues with respect to the relevant professional code(s) of ethics
10. Draw and justify a conclusion
11. Write a cogent summary of your analysis and reasoning.