Project Management Institute

Ethics Tool

Ethics Self-Assessment



Introduction

PMI members and certification holders, as a condition of their status, agree to abide by the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The Code provides an overall standard of behavior and includes specific standards to guide project managers in their professional relationships.

Based on the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, the Ethics Self-Assessment tool is intended for personal use and assists the user in thinking about his or her own ethics-related leadership and actions. It should not be returned to PMI, nor should it be used as a tool for evaluating the ethical behavior of others.

A user can choose to begin assessing her or his ethical behaviors at any time. The initial assessment will help any practitioner understand the current state of their personal ethics, which then provides the information necessary to build stronger personal ethics for the future. Ongoing assessments and re-evaluations will help the user commit to sustaining ongoing and continuous ethics improvement. This ethics assessment tool is an excellent way to measure the overall health of one's individual ethics and plan for improvements.

The Ethics Self-Assessment can help you identify:

- Areas in which you are on strong ethical ground
- Areas that you may wish to examine, including the basis for your responses
- Opportunities for further reflection

Instructions for the Use of the Ethics Self-Assessment Tool

We hope you find this tool thought-provoking and useful in your reflection on applying the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to your everyday activities. You are to be commended for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete this assessment. There is no pressure or time limit for completing this assessment, so please consider your answers thoughtfully and carefully and make comments and notes as you progress.

If you uncover "red flags" where your responses are not compatible with the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, you should use the results as an opportunity to enhance your ethical practice and leadership by developing a specific action plan. You can use the template provided with the self-assessment or use one of your own creation.

Consider PMI as a resource when you and your management team are confronted with difficult ethical dilemmas. At www.pmi.org/ethics, you can access a diverse set of practical resources that will help you understand how to integrate ethics into your own life, as well as in the communities and organizations that you practice your profession in.

This information is for educational and informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal or other professional advice.

The Ethics Self-Assessment

The Self-Assessment consists of 54 statements about ethical and professional conduct. The Ethics Self-Assessment does not have a scoring mechanism, as we do not believe that ethical behavior can or should be quantified.

Step One: Check only one answer for each of the statements. The statements have been grouped into areas of impact for ease in reflection.

Step Two: Once all the statements have been answered, take time, review the responses, and make note of statements answered with "usually," "occasionally," and, "almost never." Identify which of the answers may raise concerns ("red flags"); reflect, and decide on the ones to address.

Step Three: Using the development plan provided, identify appropriate next actions for yourself to develop and refine your ethical behaviors.

Some statements may not apply to you and it is perfectly acceptable to skip them after considering their potential extended implication in your own life and/or organization. Neither is the list exhaustive; if you have other personal considerations not explicitly called forward in the assessment tool, make note of them for reflection and inclusion in your development plan, as appropriate.

Leadership

01. I take courageous, consistent, and appropriate management actions to overcome barriers to achieving my organization's mission.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

02. I place community benefit over my personal gain.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

03. I strive to be a role model for ethical behavior.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

04. My statements and actions are consistent with professional ethical standards, including the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

05. My statements and actions are honest, even when circumstances would allow me to confuse the issues.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

06. I advocate ethical decision making by the board, management team, and other staff.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

07. I use an ethical approach to conflict resolution.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

08. I initiate and encourage discussion of the ethical aspects of management and financial issues.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

09. I promptly and candidly explain to internal and external stakeholders negative economic trends and encourage appropriate action.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

10. I use my authority solely to fulfill my responsibilities and not for self-interest or to further the interests of family, friends, or associates.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

11. When an ethical conflict confronts my organization or me, I am successful in finding an effective resolution process and ensure it is followed.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

12. I demonstrate respect for my colleagues, superiors, and staff.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

13. I demonstrate my organization's vision, mission, and value statements in my actions.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

14. I make timely decisions rather than delaying them to avoid difficult or politically risky choices.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

15. I seek the advice of an internal ethics committee when making ethically challenging decisions.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

16. My personal expense reports are accurate and are only billed to the appropriate organization(s).				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

17. I openly support establishing and monitoring internal mechanisms (e.g., an ethics committee or program) to support ethical decision making.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

18. I thoughtfully consider decisions when making a promise on behalf of the organization to a person or a group of people.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Community

19. I promote community member relations improvement as a guiding goal of my organization and as a cornerstone of my efforts on behalf of my organization.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

20. I personally devote time to developing solutions to community problems.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

21. I participate in and encourage my management team to devote personal time to community service.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Clients

22. I use a client-oriented approach to project management.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

23. I respect the practices and customs of diverse clients while maintaining the organization's mission.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

24. I promote document confidentiality and do not tolerate breaches of this confidentiality.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Board

25. I have a routine system in place for board members to make full disclosure and reveal potential conflicts of interest.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

26. I ensure that reports to the board appropriately convey risks of decisions or proposed projects.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

27. I work to keep the board focused on ethical issues of importance to the organization, community, and other stakeholders.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

28. I promote board discussion of resource allocation issues, particularly those where organizational and community interests may appear to be incompatible.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

29. I keep the board appropriately informed about issues of alleged financial malfeasance, malpractice, and potential litigious situations involving employees.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Colleagues and Staff

30. I foster discussions about ethical concerns when they arise.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

31. I maintain confidences entrusted to me.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

32. I demonstrate through personal actions and organizational policies, a zero tolerance for any form of harassment.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

33. I encourage discussions about and advocate for the implementation of the organization's code of ethics and value statements.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

34. I fulfill the promises I make.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

35. I am respectful of views different from mine.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

36. I am respectful of individuals who differ from me in ethnicity, gender, education, or job position.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

37. I convey negative news promptly and openly, not allowing employees or others to be misled.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

38. I expect and hold staff accountable for adherence to our organization's ethical standards (e.g., performance reviews).				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

39. I demonstrate that incompetent supervision is not tolerated and make timely decisions regarding marginally performing managers.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

40. I ensure adherence to ethics-related policies and practices affecting all staff.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

41. I am sensitive to employees who have ethical concerns and facilitate resolution of these concerns.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

42. I encourage the use of organizational mechanisms (e.g., an ethics committee or program) and other ethics resources to address ethical issues.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

43. I act quickly and decisively when employees are not treated fairly in their relationships with other employees.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

44. I assign staff only to official duties and do not ask them to assist me with work on behalf of my family, friends, or associates.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

45. I hold all staff and business partners accountable for compliance with professional standards, including ethical behavior.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Suppliers

50. I negotiate in good faith and my management team knows that I expect them to also negotiate in good faith.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

51. I am mindful of the importance of avoiding even the appearance of wrongdoing, conflict of interest, or interference with free competition.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

52. I personally disclose, and expect my peers to disclose, any possible conflicts of interests before pursuing or entering into relationships with potential business partners.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

53. I promote familiarity and compliance with organizational policies governing relationships with suppliers.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

54. I set an example for others in my organization by not accepting personal gifts from suppliers.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Once you have completed the assessment questionnaire, go back and examine those items not marked as “Always.” Using the development plan template on the next page (or one of your own creation), begin establishing mechanisms and timelines for self-improvement to increase your ethical stance and behaviors.

Personal Ethics Development Plan

Using your responses to the self-assessment questionnaire above, work to identify and address areas of opportunity for improvement. Consider those statements answered with "*almost never*" or "*occasionally*" and even when the answer was "*usually.*"

Step 1: Transfer those statements that you want to work on into the first column.
Step 2: Transfer the respective current *frequency* into the second column.
Step 3: Define a goal *frequency* in the third column.
Step 4: Reflect about the actions to take and establish realistic timeframes for improvement.

Personal Ethics Development Plan				
Ethical behavior I want to work on	**Current frequency**	**Goal frequency**	**Action steps**	**Timeframe**
e.g. *"03. I strive to be a role model for ethical behavior."*	*Occasionally*	*Monthly*	*Discuss the PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct with a peer or with a PMI chapter colleague*	*Within 6 months*

Tips and Recommendations:

- Establish realistic targets; continue to be motivated!
- Choose 1-3 activities to work on at a time. Focus and establish priorities.
- Review the plan periodically and monitor your progress.