

Ethics: General Ethics

U of M mandates training in ethical conduct of research, scholarship, and teaching (see www.research.umn.edu/ethics).

“Of all the traits which qualify a scientist for citizenship in the republic of science, I would put a sense of responsibility as a scientist at the very top. A scientist can be brilliant, imaginative, clever with his hands, profound, broad, narrow — but he is not much as a scientist unless he is responsible.”

— Alvin Weinberg, “*The Obligations of Citizenship in the Republic of Science*,” *Minerva*, 16: 1–3, 1978

There are many sources of ethical principles: religion, philosophers, national leaders, etc. We’ll discuss some universal themes.

Nonmaleficence Do no harm to yourself or others.

Beneficence Help yourself and others.

Autonomy Allow rational individuals to make free, informed choices.

Justice Treat people fairly; treat equals equally, unequals unequally.

Utility Maximize the ratio of benefit to harm for all people.

Fidelity Keep your promises and agreements.

Honesty Do not lie, defraud, or mislead.

Privacy Respect personal privacy and confidentiality.

For your group’s principle, think of one general situation and one statistical situation where that principle might influence a decision.

Think of a situation (either general or statistical) where your principle conflicts with another principle.

Name: _____

Think about a time you had to make an ethical choice. Describe the situation. Which principles did you consider?
