

Chapter 2: An Ethical Approach to Forensic Professionalism

Objectives

- Recognize how forensic scientists learn ethics specific to the profession
- Discuss recommendations suggested by the National Academies of Science report

Assessment Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. Which of the following should be part of training forensic scientists in ethics?
 - a. Experience
 - b. Writing**
 - c. Nothing, scientists do not need to be trained in ethics
 - d. Following a mentor
2. Loaded language is _____.
 - a. Eliminated by using neutral, descriptive words
 - b. Communication used to manipulate a person's view point
 - c. Exaggerating points
 - d. All of the above**

T/F

1. Training in ethics is done informally. **False- formal education is also needed.**
2. Forensic scientists have similar education, regardless of discipline. **False – training varies.**

Short Answer:

1. What is the downfall of not having formal training in ethics for forensic science?
2. What is it meant by competence and credibility?
3. Explain the difference between cognitive bias and confirmation bias. Give an example of each.

Essay Questions:

1. What are the necessary components that should be covered in a forensic science ethics course? Explain these in detail, including significance.
2. Discuss the NAS report recommendations to reduce ethical issues for forensic science. Please state pros, cons, and feasibility/considerations of each.
3. How is awareness an important component of ethical behavior?

Discussion/Critical Thinking

1. Where should formal ethics be taught?
2. How do ethics relate to religion?
3. Should laboratories assure that all employees receive ethics training upon hire? Should agencies be required to update employees every so often? Why/why not?
4. Some people believe that the scientist should have no details of a case, whereas others think that the details are necessary for examinations. *What do you think? Explain your perspective.*
 - a. *Do you think that this is different for every scientist?*
 - b. *Do you think that this is different for the various disciplines in forensic science?*
 - c. *Do you think the type of case delineates the amount of information needed?*

Class Activity/Exercise

1. Compare and contrast the NAS and PCAST reports. Determine if there has been progress toward the recommendations. If so, what has been done. If not, what are the limiting factors?