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# *Ethics at the Workplace: Collaborative Teaching between APB UiTM NS and APB UiTM Melaka*

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Workplace ethics are crucial in any organisation to ensure its smooth operations and to help the organisation maintain specific standards of accountability, responsibility, and professionalism among leaders, employers, employees, stakeholders, customers, and the general public (Shafie et al., 2016). In this article, we outline what ethics in the workplace are, why they are important to establish, and what specific benefits organisations and stakeholders may enjoy from initiating an ethical code of conduct.

An online webinar was conducted on 11th May 2023 as part of a collaborative teaching programme for the code ELC650: English for Professional Interactions between APB UiTMNS (Seremban Campus) and APB UiTM Melaka (Alor Gajah Campus). This webinar involved 153 students and four lecturers from both campuses. The invited speaker was Mr KV Krishna Kumar, Operations Manager at Advanced Genesis Equipment Sdn Bhd, Klang. Mr Kumar has more than 35 years of working experience, and he gave insights to our students on the importance of embracing good and mindful ethics and conduct at the workplace. Here are some of the important points he spoke on.

## **What is Ethics?**

Ethics is a system of accepted beliefs that control behaviour that is based on morals (Shafie et al., 2016). Moral principles here relate to a person's behaviour in conducting an activity, whether it is right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust.

## **Why is Ethics at the workplace important?**

Having good ethics at the workplace is essential as it:

- Promotes Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Fosters a Positive Public Image.
- Protects Company Assets.
- Provides Emotional Security.

Remember, no man is an island. As such, in any organisation, an employee represents the organisation at all times and needs to promote good teamwork and cooperation and, above all, uphold the organisation's image. Thus, having good ethics provides the emotional security and stability that is very much needed.

## **Examples of Ethical Behaviour at the workplace**

- Obey Company Rules and Regulations
- Communicate Effectively
- Develop Professional Relationships
- Take Responsibility
- Professionalism / Standards
- Be Accountable
- Uphold Trust

All employees are given an employment contract to sign upon being offered the job. Some organisations also provide a handbook on the code of conduct at the workplace. This handbook outlines the company policies (do's and don'ts) and spells out important aspects such as tardiness, dressing, the language in which the employee

communicates, as well as important matters such as leave and claims entitlement. Therefore, an employee needs to read the contract or handbook before accepting the job offer to be able to obey company rules and regulations and avoid conflict of interest as well as maintain the confidentiality of company information at all times when he/she becomes an employee and part of the organisation.



Another important aspect is the ability to communicate effectively in the workplace. An employee should practice the 7 Cs of effective communication, of which he or she should be clear in thoughts and actions; correct, complete, concrete and coherent; and most importantly, be courteous at all times no matter how bad or heated the situation is.

Ethics at the workplace also involves developing professional relationships at all levels. Firstly, an employee needs to understand his/her needs in the organisation. Why did you take on this job? What are your goals to achieve? Once goals are set, then give yourself a timeframe to achieve these goals. Improve your communication skills by not only being a good speaker but a good listener as well. Listen attentively when others talk and build relationships. Boundaries are also important, and an employee should know his/her boundaries so as not to cross the limits. There is a fine line between being personal and being professional in the workplace. Remember to avoid bad gossip and negative actions at the workplace, as this is not ethical. Focus instead on the positive and show appreciation when needed.

Being an employee also requires one to take responsibility for his/her actions at work. This includes completing tasks given on time and in line with the policies of the organization, as this will reveal your character as being a good worker or a procrastinator. It is also very unethical to leak information about a company's confidential documents or information without the consent of the management. For example, sharing exam papers with others outside the domain of the university without getting consent from the management. In securing a long-term position in a company, an employee needs to show accountability and establish the trust of the management and others.

Professionalism at the workplace is all about how an employee conducts himself/herself in the organisation. It also includes showing respect to other colleagues. Acknowledge your seniors, learn to humble yourself and simultaneously execute confidence. Be accountable for all actions taken and always complete all assigned tasks with integrity.

Accountability is another important aspect of being ethical in the workplace. An employee needs to show quality in the output of the assigned tasks. This includes prioritising tasks so as to be able to meet the deadlines given. Always be in the present mode and know what happens daily at the workplace. Punctuality is also very, very important in the workplace. Being punctual to work speaks a volume about your character and personality and your position in the organisation. No employer will tolerate an employee who is often late to work. Meeting deadlines and taking responsibility for an assigned task is of utmost importance as you need to "own" your role.

Trust is another ethical aspect in the workplace. How do you gain trust from your boss or co-workers? To gain trust, you must be consistent in your work, deliver your tasks, and always adhere to company values and procedures. Remember, you must always be honest and uphold your organisation's policies.

It is also crucial to avoid unethical behaviour in the workplace. Unethical behaviour is any behaviour that violates widely accepted societal moral norms. Here is a list of unethical behaviour that is common in the workplace.

### Examples of Unethical Behaviour at the workplace

- Lies
- Taking Credit For Others Hard Work
- Verbal Harassment / Abuse
- Violence
- Non-Office Related Work
- Extended Breaks
- Theft / Embezzlement
- Sexual Harassment
- Corrupt Practices



Former Supreme Court Judge Potter Stewart (2022) mentions that ethics is “knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is the right thing to do.” As such, employees should avoid unethical behaviour, as listed above. Telling lies to cover up mistakes is a sure no-no, as sooner or later, the truth will surface, and you will lose face and your credibility as an employee. A more serious “crime” would be taking credit for others' hard work. This act is equal to committing injustice as you should give due credit to the person(s) responsible for the competition and success of a project or task and not take credit if you did not fully participate in it. Other more serious ethical offences include verbal harassment or abuse (usually happens when matters get heated up),

showing violence, sexual harassment and indulging in corrupt practices such as taking bribes. Even theft and embezzlement are considered serious ‘unethical’ crimes. Other more ‘subtle’ offences, but which happen widely everywhere, are taking extended breaks during break time and indulging in non-office related work during office hours such as sales and online businesses.

In conclusion, the webinar was a good eye-opener for our students as they will be joining the workforce soon and gaining insights from the needs of the industry through Mr KV Krishna Kumar was indeed fruitful. The webinar was engaging, and students posed many questions and their doubts to the speaker. Overall, they found the webinar very useful.

\*The authors would like to acknowledge the notes and input from Mr KV Krishna Kumar, Operation Manager, Advanced Genesis Sdn Bhd, Klang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.



**ETHICS AT  
WORKPLACE: THE  
MORAL CODE FOR  
EMPLOYEES**

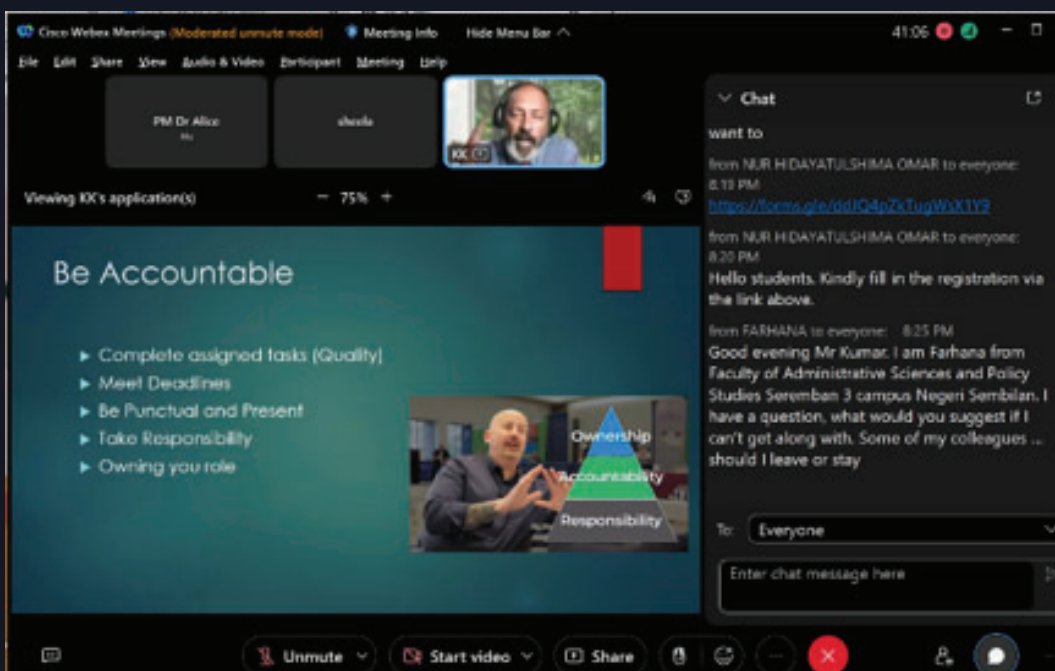
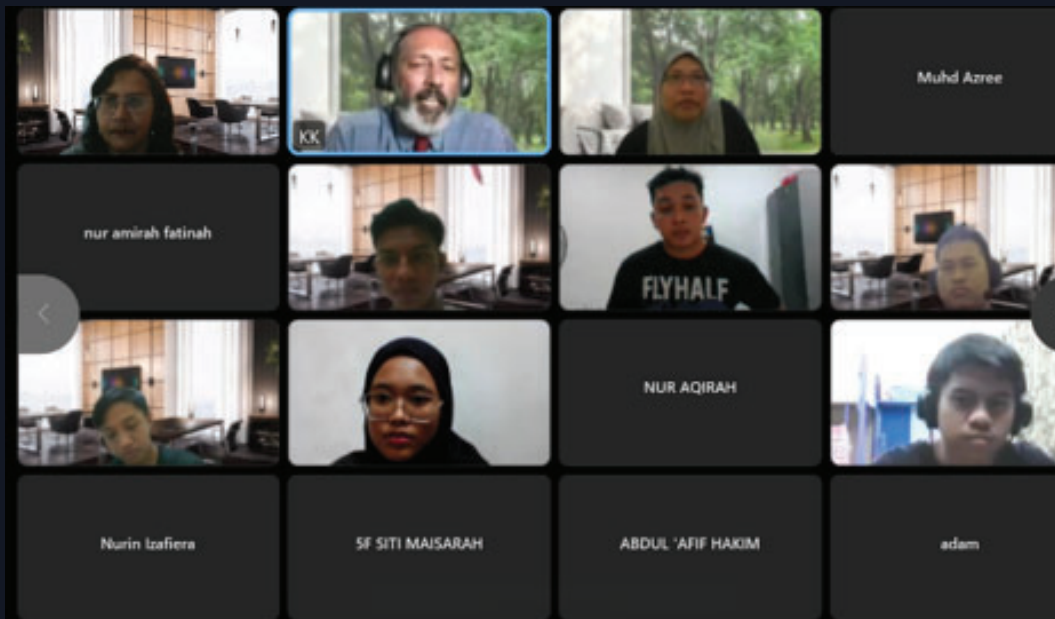
**11 MAY 2023 | 8:15PM - 9:30PM**

**ONLINE ONLY, March - July 2023**

To join us  
**SCAN ME**

**INVITED SPEAKER**  
KV Krishna Kumar Devadas (KK)  
Operations Manager  
Advanced Genesis Equipment Sdn.Bhd.

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