

Foundations of ethical decision-making

Course Overview

Summary

This course presents a number of ethical dilemmas, through which you will examine ethical decision-making and establish your own ethical decision making processes. This highlights the complexities of human desires and societal expectations that rarely converge into a universally satisfying resolution. This course will also help unravel the myth of absolute impartiality as we explore the inescapable presence of bias and break the boundary between ethics and law.

It is not all doom and gloom however. This course culminates by looking at the ethical decision making process and highlighting the key steps shared by many that help support the resolution of complex ethical dilemmas.

Learning Outcomes

This course explores the foundational philosophies that underpin ethical decision-making and how these impact on the decision making process in data centric examples.

To achieve this, you will:

- Explore the ethical frameworks of Utilitarianism, Deontology, and Virtue Ethics, and be able to explain the core principles, their strengths and weaknesses and apply them to different contexts, including data ethics and AI
- Investigate the application of ethical frameworks through real world examples, demonstrating the importance of Ethical Pluralism

- Examine the key steps that help support the resolution of complex ethical dilemmas and their implementation through frameworks and tools

Learning Experience

Number of modules	3 (+ reflective workbook)
Modality	Asynchronous / Self-directed / Online
Notional learning hours	1.5 hours (total)
Assessment	Formative
Certificate	Certificate of completion

Each module contains learning content that introduces the key concepts in the module, providing examples and case studies that demonstrate these concepts in practice. Each module contains a series of formative questions to support your learning. Learning is applied in activities throughout, and provides a basis for understanding the broad landscape of ethical frameworks and how they are used to understand decision-making, as well as tools and processes we can use to document, and understand our own ethical decision-making.

Module Summary

Module Name	Description
Exploring ethical frameworks in decision-making	From the realm of artificial intelligence to real-world scenarios like the UK exam grading case study, we will delve into the principles, strengths, and weaknesses of various ethical frameworks. Additionally, we will investigate how ethical questions can be leveraged to enhance diversity and inclusion within ethics committees, fostering a comprehensive range of perspectives and enriching the decision-making process in organisations.

	<p>This module explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your own approach to ethical decision-making • The main ethical frameworks • Ethical pluralism • Building trust in ethical decision-making • Improving ethical decision-making practices and diversity
<p>Unveiling the complexity of ethical decision-making</p>	<p>Having looked at the main ethical frameworks that shape decision-making, it is necessary to explore the uncomfortable complexity in ethical decision-making.</p> <p>This module presents a number of unavoidable, and potentially upsetting, paradoxes. While the scenarios presented are entirely fictitious and could be viewed as having no benefit, they help uncover some of the key myths in ethical decision making as well as breaking the boundary between ethics and law.</p> <p>This section highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rarity of universally satisfying outcomes • The relationship between choice and bias • The interplay between ethics and law and when the boundaries blur. • The impact of cultural norms on ethical decision-making
<p>Steps for ethical decision-making</p>	<p>This module serves as an exploration into the rich array of ethical frameworks and tools that underpin effective decision-making, particularly within the context of technology integration. We close this module by introducing the SAD (Situation, Analysis, Decision) model. This model serves to provide a sustainable approach to ethical decision making and the nuanced variations within the frameworks.</p> <p>Applying this model to real-world scenarios, including Amazon's AI-driven recruiting tool, provides structure for each phase, identifying their inherent strengths, vulnerabilities, and the pivotal role of principles like transparency, accountability, and fairness.</p>

	<p>Extending the SAD model to encompass Action and Monitoring (SAD-AM) amplifies the significance of moving beyond mere decisions, emphasising the responsibility to cultivate trust in decisions and the continuous monitoring of their repercussions.</p>
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