Institution: University of Leeds

Unit of Assessment: 32 Philosophy (including History of Science)

Title of case study: Impact Case Study 1: Reasons for Action and Good Judgement: Revitalising Professional Ethics

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

More than a decade's research at the University of Leeds has focused on a cohesive set of issues bearing directly and indirectly on ethics in the workplace: reasons for action, moral psychology, good judgement, character and integrity. The impact of this work covers: consultancy on organisational ethics; development and delivery of CPD for engineers; use of web-based and online materials to engage professionals in ethical reasoning; applied research and engagement with practitioners on integrity at work; a submission to the Leveson enquiry; and an ethics template for the National Nuclear Laboratory. Its significance and reach in embedding ethics in professional life is demonstrated by the range of these activities and the size of the organisations involved.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Increasing public scrutiny presses businesses and the professions to address ethical issues at all levels of decision making. However the materials available to develop professional ethical judgement are often limited. Professional ethics textbooks typically present practitioners with a selection of 'ethical theories' (utilitarianism, deontology …) as though judgement depends on picking a (correct) theory and applying it to cases. Equally, professions have presented members either with a code of rules, or a set of abstract principles. This leaves practitioners with the challenge of arriving at good judgement in light of rules which are not self-interpreting and may conflict or leave gaps.

Our research, carried out at Leeds since 1997, points out the limitations of these approaches and underpins a different framework for practical professional ethics by examining the role of good judgement and character in ethical practice. **Heuer** (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy, since 2003) and Lawlor (Research Fellow, Inter-Disciplinary Ethics Applied Centre (IDEA), since 2005) **(1, 2)** explore complications in the relation between ethical theories such as deontology and consequentialism and reasons for action and judgement. Rather than taking an abstract theory, or a code of rules, as sufficient to resolving a practical problem, professionals should consider the reasons that apply within the case in question and reflect on the sources and significance of those reasons.

The need for good judgement is further underpinned by **Väyrynen** (Senior Lecturer, Philosophy, since 2007) **(3), Heuer** and **Lang** (Lecturer, Philosophy, since 2005) who all argue (against "reasons fundamentalism") that reasons themselves need explanation. Explaining reasons requires considering various normative factors such as values and rights and using judgement to determine what reasons these factors ground in the circumstances. This account of reasons for action as signposts to what matters coheres well with the suggested importance of good judgement in professional practice.

This foundational research is integrated with more concrete research on practical decision-making in **Megone's** (Senior Lecturer then Professor, Philosophy, since 1997) work on neo-Aristotelian moral psychology **(4, 5).** This emphasises the role of 'habituation' (the acquisition of behavioural traits through guidance, practice and repetition) in the development of character and the capacity for good judgement. Of particular relevance here is research on the significance of experience and quasi-experience in habituation -- their significance is reinforced by work by Dow (Research Fellow, IDEA, since 2006) and **Megone (5, 6)** on the role of emotions and affect in the appreciation of values and reasons for action. This research grounds the role that 'affective engagement' plays in our applied analysis of what it takes for an organisation to promote integrity (*Promoting Integrity in Organisations –see section 4.).* Organisational values need to be apprehended *affectively* by their members, through 'habituation', if they are reliably to inform practical decision making.

This experiential approach and the theoretical research underpinning it suggest a particular role for case-studies, designed to achieve appropriate emotional engagement, and for organisational culture, in order to enhance skills in good judgement. In this way our research has directly informed the design of ethics manuals and ethics training in the professions, as featured in our portfolio of impactful activities below.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

(1). U. Heuer, "The Paradox of Deontology, Revisited", 236-267, in Mark Timmons (ed), *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011. *Peer-reviewed journal. Included in REF 2.*

(2). R. Lawlor, *Shades of Goodness: Gradability, Demandingness and the Structure of Moral Theories*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). *Available on request.*

(3). P. Väyrynen, "A Wrong Turn to Reasons?" in *New Waves in Metaethics*, ed. Michael Brady (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 185-207. *Available on request.*

(4). C. Megone, "The use of case histories in business ethics", in C. Megone and S. Robinson (eds.), *Case Histories in Business Ethics*, , (London, Routledge, 2002), 161-174. *Included in RAE 2008, available on request.*

(5). C. Megone, "Aristotelian Ethics", in Ruth Chadwick (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Applied Ethics*, Vol 1, (San Diego: Academic Press, 1997), 209-232. (and fully revised for second edition, 2012). *Included in RAE 2001, available on request.*

(6). J. Dow "Aristotle's theory of the emotions: emotions as pleasures and pains", in eds. Pearson, G and Pakaluk, M, *Moral Psychology and Human Action in Aristotle* (OUP 2011), 47-74. *Included in REF 2.*

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)
Our impact focuses on the role of habituation and organisational culture in the development of individual good judgement which affectively appreciates the significance of ethical reasons in professional life.

Our research has led to impactful changes on:
- *professional bodies* themselves, transforming their approach to ethics from a mere statement of ethical codes to a focus on quasi-experiential case study and training design, and on the contents of ethics manuals; and via these,
- *individual* professional practice and good judgement.

The impact has had considerable reach because of the size of the professional bodies and organisations involved, and significance because of the beneficial effect on the way individuals engage with ethics training to develop good judgement, and in turn embed ethics in professional life, as exemplified by the impact on the National Nuclear Laboratory and the Leveson Inquiry. Examples include the following:

I. *In engineering*, the Royal Academy of Engineering's *Ingenious* programme (2007-9) funded our development of training workshops to 'bring to life' the Academy's four ethical principles. The workshops helped individuals to incorporate these in good judgement by creating case studies, designed with practising engineers, that provided quasi-experiential engagement with ethical issues to which the principles applied. Approaching 150 attended from major firms (Amey, Arup, Jacobs etc.) *"I enjoyed the case study and ethical interpretation of 'lying'. I will use what I have learned." "Indeed it will impact my working life and the decisions I will make in my profession"* **(A)**

The success of this quasi-experiential approach to 'habituation' led to a £20,000 commission from the Institute of Engineering and Technology to design web-based case studies that would help members to affectively appreciate the significance of the principles of the IET's ethics code. On average more than 800 members a month have visited the cases since January 2010. IET's Membership Manager commented: *"We wanted to provide a support service for our members, who may face ethical dilemmas in an engineering context ….We are absolutely delighted with the case studies and judging by the web stats our members also greatly appreciate the resource."* **(B)**

 Our approach was taken further through an invitation from the Royal Academy of Engineering to develop its *Guide to Ethics in Engineering Practice*. Aimed at all 350,000 UK engineers, this was launched in September 2011 at a conference attended by 80 leaders in engineering. 13,000+ hits on the web version demonstrates regular usage. The Head of Policy at the Academy commented: *"The IDEA CETL team has produced an extremely useful set of case studies…. Professional engineers at all stages of their career have found them thought provoking and important, especially in the education and training of young engineers."* **(C)**

These activities are also having significant impact on individual engagement with ethics training and in turn on professional judgement. On reading the Guide, the Chief Engineer at the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL; 800+ engineers), commissioned an ethics template to be incorporated in all NNL project plans. As he commented: *"Through collaboration with IDEA we have produced a practical tool to assure our activities against the Royal Academy of Engineering's statement of ethical principles. This will allow the NNL to make visible its commitment to ethical practice alongside more established mechanisms to illustrate safety and quality excellence."* **D)**

II. *In the financial area and beyond*, the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW) funded (£46,146) a project on *Promoting Integrity in Organisations (2012)*. The importance here of organisational culture and leadership reflects the neo-Aristotelian approach (adopted by **Megone**) to the significance of wider communities and exemplars for the habituation of ethical values, and the relation of such embedding of values to promoting genuine integrity.

The significance and reach of this project is confirmed by the noteworthy attendees at its launch events in London and Leeds (World Bank, FSA, Oxfam etc.) and by continuing dissemination world wide (ICAEW events in Cyprus, Singapore, Vietnam etc., and discussions in *The Accountant, Chartered Banker, Financial World*). Impact on specific individuals was in part achieved by the engagement of individual ICAEW members in the research process (1500 in the qualitative research, more than 3x the usual participation rate, and 96 in the quantitative research). **(E)**

The significant impact on individuals also extends to the *Leveson Inquiry on the Culture, Practice and Ethics of the Press.* Our report was submitted as part of written evidence on the role of organisational culture and leadership in the development of good ethical judgement in the media. Its impact can be seen in the use made of it in both Part I and Part IV of Lord Leveson's final report.**(F)**

The Commonwealth Secretariat also engaged with our Integrity work as shown by the Head of Thematic Programmes commissioning seminars at the 2011 Commonwealth Caribbean Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of Public Services Annual Consultative Meeting on the Theme *Leadership for Development.* The seminars, attended by delegates representing 14 different countries, were *"very well received".* **(G)**

We have also engaged with the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA, worldwide membership 23,000, 59% UK, 41% overseas) and the Chartered Institute of Insurance (CII), using the quasi-experiential approach to habituation to improve their CPD work in ethics. The IFoA's professional ethics training has been redesigned (initial contract c. £80,000) through collaboration with practising actuaries to create online ethics case-studies that will foster affective engagement in the exercise of ethical judgement. (From Feb 2012 to May 2013, 1011 members enrolled.) The initial impact involves (required) engagement with ethics training in a significantly revitalised form. For CII we have worked on similar methods to promote 'habituation' and have delivered workshops on developing good ethical judgement, (2011 to 2013, 380 members enrolled) **(H)**

Through charitable funding we have made our work accessible to small businesses and sole practitioners by developing a Professional Ethics Network (membership 350+). This allows 40 practitioners to engage with our experiential mode of ethics training every quarter (20+ events since 2008, including several co-badged events with UK Inter-Professional Group). Again we foster good judgement in part through quasi-experiential case studies created with practitioners. **(I)**

Our work on promoting good judgement and integrity in individuals has also incorporated an audit activity (for both the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Higher Education Academy). This interrogated the extent to which effective habituation had given employees an affective appreciation of the organisation's professional values. As the Head of Internal Audit at HEFCE commented: *"Commissioning the Leeds IDEA team to assess [our ethical] culture has proved invaluable. … In particular, it made the significant connection between our role, both strategically and operationally, and theoretical ethical principles. …   The final report, which leaves the Council with much to think about, has been well received by the Council overall."* **(J)**

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

A. Attendee lists at for the seminars, and CEQs from which the quotes are taken available on request.
B. The website is at http://www.theiet.org/membership/career/ethics/ (accessed 24/09/13). (snapshot available) Contract, website visits data report, and e-mail quote from IET membership manager available on request (confirmation of email dated 05/11/13).
C. The web version of the guide is at:
http://www.raeng.org.uk/societygov/engineeringethics/principles.htm (accessed 24/09/13) (snapshot available). Data for attendees at launch, confirmation of 13,000+ hits, and e-mail quote from the Head of Policy at the Academy all available on request (email dated 11/02/13).
D. E-mailed quote from the Chief Engineer at NNL available on request.
E. Real Integrity: Promoting Integrity in Organisations (2012) is available on the ICAEW website. http://www.icaew.com/~/media/Files/Technical/Ethics/real-integrity-full-report.pdf (accessed 24/09/13) Contract and attendee lists and keynote speakers for events held at Chartered Accountants Hall in the City of London in June 2012 and at Leeds in October 2012 available on request. Papers in the Accountant, the Chartered Banker, Financial World available on request
F. The discussion of the report at the Leveson Inquiry took place on July 16th 2012. The written and oral evidence are at the inquiry website: www.levesoninquiry.org.uk. (accessed 24/09/13) The report is noted in references to Chris Megone The Leveson Report, Volume 1, pp. 63, 64, 69, 75, 77, 83, 84, 86, 89, 180; and Volume 4, pp. 1588, 1684, 1686. (Snapshot of website available.)
G. E-mails of the commission, and of the report on the seminars, available on request.
H. Evidence of payments for the initial contract, emailed reports of IFoA enrolment of 1011 members from Feb 2012 –May 2013, IFoA e-learning materials and CII commissioned pilot work, e-mailed enrolment figures for 380 CII members 2011- Feb, 2013 all available on request.
I. www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125163/consultancy_and_training/2115/professional_ethics_network_pen (accessed 24/09/13). Membership list and attendee lists for events at the Professional Ethics Network and co-badged events with the UK Inter-Professional Group all available on request.
J. E-mail quote from the Head of Internal Audit at HEFCE available on request.