



Providing Compassionate, Respectful and Caring Service

MEDICAL LABORATORY

NTQF Level -III

Learning Guide #1

Unit of Competence: -	Providing Compassionate, Respectful and Caring Service
Module Title: -	Providing Compassionate, Respectful and Caring Service
LG Code:	HLT MLS3 M01 0919
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LO 1: Applying professionalism and ethical practice principles



Instruction Sheet	Learning Guide #1
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following **content coverage** and topics –

- 1.1. Definition of terminologies
 - 1.1.1. Profession
 - 1.1.2. Right and obligation
 - 1.1.3. Ethics /Code of conduct
 - 1.1.4. Compassionate and respectful care (CRC)
- 1.2. Ethical principles of medical laboratory
- 1.3. Medical laboratory code of conducts
- 1.4. Professional values
- 1.5. Adherence to ethical principles of the medical laboratory profession

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, **you will be able to –**

- Identified and executed Ethical principles and issues of the profession
- Identified and executed Professional code of conducts
- Recognized and demonstrated Professional values (responsiveness, compassion, trustworthiness, integrity, honesty etc)
- Maintained and evaluated Adherence to ethical principles of the profession
- Professional practice according to applicable standards



Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below.
3. Read the information written in the information “Sheet 1, Sheet 2, Sheet 3 and Sheet 4,---” in page 1, 12, 20,and 23 respectively.
4. Accomplish the “Self-check 1, Self-check t 2, Self-check 3 and Self-check 4” ,---” in page 11, 19, 22,and 25 respectively



1.1. Over view of Medical laboratory ethics

- **Definition of terminologies**
- **Ethics**-moral principle or rules of behavior that govern or influence a person's behavior



- **Rule**- a statement of what, should or must be done in particular circumstance.
- **Code of conduct**- a set of professional standards agreed on by members of a particular profession
- **Code of conduct for medical laboratory** personnel should include those practices and attitudes which characterize a professional and responsible lab officer.
- **Laboratory policies** are those decisions which are taken in consultation with other medical staff to enable a laboratory to operate reliably and effectively in harmony with other departments.
 - Those policies usually cover:
 - i. Laboratory hour and emergency work
 - ii. Range of tests to be performed and those to be referred to higher level.

Range of tests to be performed depend on

- ✓ The number of material resources



- ✓ The availability of material resources
- ✓ The types of health institution
- ✓ Referral of specimen
- ✓ Collection of Specimen
- ✓ Work load capacity of the laboratory
- ✓ Delivery of laboratory reports



A profession:

- ✓ Is an occupation that requires extensive training and the study and mastery of a specialized knowledge and usually has a professional associations, ethical code and process of certification and licensing
- ✓ Is a calling that requires special knowledge and skilled preparation

A profession is generally distinguished from other kinds of occupation by:

- ✓ Its requirement of prolonged specialized training acquiring a body of knowledge pertinent to the role to be performed and
- ✓ An orientation of the individual to ward service, ether to community or organization.

Criteria of a profession

- ✓ Professional status is achieved when an occupation involves practice
- ✓ A profession carries great individual responsibility and based up on theoretical knowledge
- ✓ The privilege to practice is granted only after the individual was completed a standardized program of highly specialized education and has demonstrated an ability to meet the standards for practice.

Elements of profession

- ✓ An intellectual discipline and standard of knowledge
- ✓ A representative boy of practitioners.
- ✓ Standard of conduct
- ✓ Service and advice, in the interest of the patient or client

Is a medical laboratory is a profession? Yes!!

B/c:

- A. Has intellectual discipline and standard of knowledge
- B. Has university degree/College diploma and a practical training
- C. Has a representative body of practitioners
 - ✓ EMLA (Ethiopian Medical Laboratory Association)



D. Standard of conduct

- ✓ There are standard of conducts known throughout the profession.

E. Service and advice:

- ✓ Province service and advice in the interest of the patients

A **profession** generally references a doctor, lawyer, nurse or other skilled worker who was required to obtain college/university training.

▪ **Definition of professional ethics**

Vocation

- ✓ Is an occupation that requires usually skills and education program range from short units (ten weeks or less) to long term program up to two years length
- ✓ Is an occupation or the employment of an individual that is pursued more for its benefits to others or the society at large rather than for its monetary benefits
- ✓ Income is a secondary benefit of a vocation. Thus, a vocation is seen as a source of enjoyment for the individual as it fulfills his psychological and spiritual needs.

The word vocation comes from Latin Vocare, which means to call. In modern times, a vocation refers to an occupation for which a person has special abilities or is trained to do that job.

What is the difference between Vocation and Profession?

- ✓ Though both vocation, as well as profession, indicates the career or the occupation through which an individual makes a livelihood, vocation is a broader term than profession.
- ✓ Profession refers to the career that one opts for, getting extensive training and acquiring special skills to become eligible for a job in it.
- ✓ Vocation refers to an occupation for which god gives a calling to the individual.
- ✓ Vocation can mean not just the profession or the occupation that an individual pursues for a living but also the occupation for which he receives a calling from god.



- ✓ Profession requires training and qualification whereas vocation is the innate ability in an individual towards a particular occupation.

Note:

- ✓ A **vocation** is generally a job that requires a particular set of skills acquired through experience or through training but not necessarily dependent on a college degree. These would include plumbing, electrician, mechanic, etc.

Ethics: is the science of moral value. It is composed of moral beliefs and rules about right and wrong.

- ✓ Can be defined as the branch of philosophy dealing with standards of conduct and moral judgment.
- ✓ It refers to a method of inquiry that assists people to understand the morality of human behavior. (I.e. it is the study of morality).
- ✓ It refers to the practices or beliefs of a certain group (i.e. nursing ethics, Physicians' ethics).

Ethics is concerned what ought to be, what is right, or wrong, good or bad. It is the base on moral reasoning and reflects set of values It is a formal reasoning process used to determine right conduct

Ethical principles

The ethical principles are:

Autonomy (respect for persons)

- ✓ Is the promotion of independent choice, self-determination and freedom of action
- ✓ Means independence and ability to be self-directed in healthcare.
- ✓ Is the basis for the client's right to self-determination? It means clients are entitled to make decision about what will happen to their body

The term autonomy implies the following basic elements

- ✓ The autonomous person is respected



- ✓ The autonomous person must be able to determine personal goals.
- ✓ The autonomous person has the freedom to act upon the choices
- ✓ Right after admission patients are asked about personal and private matters

Beneficence (doing well)

- ✓ This principle is the basis for all health care providers.

The principle of beneficence has three components:

- ✓ Promote health
- ✓ Prevent harm
- ✓ Remove evil or harm

Non-maleficence (avoiding harm)

- ✓ Is the converse of beneficence? It means to avoid doing harm. When working with clients, health care workers must not cause injury or suffering to clients.
- ✓ It is to avoid causing deliberate harm, risk of harm and harm that occurs during the performance of beneficial acts.

E.g. Experimental research that have negative consequences on the client.

- ✓ No maleficence also means avoiding harm as a consequence of good. In that case the harm must be weighed against the expected benefit.

Justice (fairness)

- ✓ Is fair, equitable and appropriate treatment.
- ✓ It is the basis for the obligation to treat all clients in an equal and fair way. Just decision is based on client need and fair distribution resources. It would be unjust to make such decision based on how much he or she likes each client

Professional ethics

- ✓ Is the moral principle which should guide members of the professions in their dealings with each other and their patients, the patrons, the state, etc...



- ✓ Is a field of applied ethics whose purpose is to define, clarify, and criticize professional work and its typical values
- ✓ Is a set of standards that describe the professional behavior that is expected in all fields of work

Professional ethics examines the moral and ethical issues that arise in a corporate environment. It is a code of values and norms that actually guide practical decisions when they are made by professionals.

Professional ethics is a fully idealized set of values whose purpose is to explicate the best possible world in which the given profession could be working.



Self-Check -1	Written Test
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Directions: Choose the best possible answer for all the following questions. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

- Ethics is the science of moral value?
A. True B. False C. Unknown
- Which one of the following ethical principle is the promotion of independent choice, self-determination and freedom of action?
A. Autonomy
B. Beneficence
C. Non-malficence
D. Justice
- Why Laboratory is a profession?
A. Has intellectual discipline and standard of knowledge
B. Has university degree/College diploma and a practical training
C. Has a representative body of practitioners
D. Standard of conduct as well as Service and advice:
E. All of the above

Note: Satisfactory rating - 4 points

Unsatisfactory - below 4 points

Answer Sheet

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-2	Rights and obligations of Laboratory profession
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Getting the right diagnosis and treatment is the right of a patient. But unlike other rights, patients may fail to understand this particular right. The fact is that laboratory is known only to the practitioner and hence it is up to the practitioner and the existing regulations whether patients are satisfied with the service or not.

1.2.1. Humanity and justice

Humanity:

- ✓ Refers to the human race or mankind as a whole, to that which is characteristically human, or to that which distinguishes human beings from other animals or from other animal species primal nature.
- ✓ it is to mean the tenderness to reach out for those who are suffering

Justice:

Justice is fair, equitable and appropriate treatment. Justice refers to fair handling and similar standard of care for similar cases; and fair and equitable resource distribution among citizens. It is the basis for treating all clients in an equal and fair way. A just decision is based on client need and fair distribution of resources. It would be unjust to make such decision based on how much he or she likes each client

Example:

- ✓ Resource scarcity is the common issue in healthcare settings. For example, there may be only one or two neurosurgeons and many patients on the waitlist who need the expertise of these neurosurgeons. In this case we need to serve patients while promoting the principle of justice in transparent way. Example, the rule of first come first serve could be an appropriate rule.
- ✓ Justice requires the treatment of all patients equally, irrespective of their sex, education, income or other personal backgrounds.



1.2.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality in healthcare ethics underlines the importance of respecting the privacy of information revealed by a patient to his or her health care provider, as well the limitation of healthcare providers to disclose information to a third party. The healthcare provider must obtain permission from the patient to make such a disclosure.

The information given confidentially, if disclosed to the third party without the consent of the patient, may harm the patient, violating the principle of non-maleficence. Keeping confidentiality promotes autonomy and benefit of the patient.

The high value that is placed on confidentiality has three sources:

Autonomy: personal information should be confidential, and be revealed after getting a consent from the person

Respect for others: human beings deserve respect; one important way of showing respect is by preserving their privacy.

Trust: confidentiality promotes trust between patients and health workers

The right of patient to confidentiality

- ✓ All identifiable information about a patient's health status, medical condition, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment and all other information of a personal kind, must be kept confidential, even after death. Exceptionally, family may have a right of access to information that would inform them of their health risks.
- ✓ Confidential information can only be disclosed if the patient gives explicit consent or if expressly provided for in the law. Information can be disclosed to other healthcare providers only on a strictly "need to know" basis unless the patient has given explicit consent.
- ✓ All identifiable patient data must be protected. The protection of the data must be appropriate to the manner of its storage. Human substances from which identifiable data can be derived must also be protected.



Exceptions to the requirement to maintain confidentiality

- ✓ Routine breaches of confidentiality occur frequently in many healthcare institutions. Many individuals (physicians, health officers, nurses, laboratory technicians, students, etc) require access to a patient's health records in order to provide adequate care to that person and, for students, to learn how to practice care provision.

- ✓ Care providers routinely inform the family members of a deceased person about the cause of death. These breaches of confidentiality are usually justified, but they should be kept to a minimum and those who gain access to confidential information should be made aware of the need not to spread it any further than is necessary for descendants benefit. Where possible, patients should be informed ahead that such a breach might occur.

- ✓ Many countries have laws for the mandatory reporting of patients who suffer from designated diseases, those deemed not fit to drive and those suspected of child abuse. Care providers should be aware of the legal requirements to be able to disclose patient information. However, legal requirements can conflict with the respect for human rights that underlies healthcare ethics. Therefore, care providers should look carefully at the legal requirement to allow such an infringement on a patient's confidentiality and assure that it is justified. If care providers are persuaded to comply with legal requirements to disclose their patients' medical information, it is advisable to discuss this issue with their patients the necessity of any disclosure before it occurs and enlist their co-operation.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is legal document whereby a patient signs written information with complete information about the purpose, benefits, risks and other alternatives before he/she receives the care intended. It is a body of shared decision making process, not just an agreement. Patient must obtain and being empowered with adequate information and ensure that he/she participated in their care process.

For consent to be valid, it must be voluntary and informed, and the person consenting must have the capacity to make the decision.



These terms are explained below:

Voluntary: the decision to either consent or not to consent to treatment must be made by the person him or herself, and must not be influenced by pressure from medical staff, friends or family. This is to promote the autonomy of the patient.

Informed: the person must be given all of the information in terms of what the treatment involves, including the benefits and risks, whether there are reasonable alternative treatments and the consequences of not doing the treatment. This will help to avoid harm—patients may harm themselves if they decide based on unwarranted and incorrect information.

Capacity: the person must be capable of giving consent, which means they understand the information given to them, and they can use it to make an informed decision.

General principle

You should ensure that informed consent be given by a patient before any medical treatment is carried out. The ethical and legal rationale behind this is to respect the patient's autonomy and their right to control his or her life. The basic idea of personal autonomy is that everyone's actions and decisions are his or her own

Information for patients

Effective communication is a key to achieving informed consent. You should take appropriate steps to find out what patients want to know about their condition and what they ought to know about their condition, its examination and treatment.

Every adult patient is presumed to have the capacity to make decisions about their own healthcare. A care provider or health worker has a duty to assist patients to make informed decisions by giving them information in a clear and comprehensible manner; and ensure that they have appropriate support.

A healthcare worker should consider patients' individual needs and priorities when providing information.

For example, a client's or patients' beliefs, culture, occupation or other factors may have a bearing on the information when making a decision. The health worker should ask a patient whether they have understood the information they have received and if they need more information before making a decision. The care provider must answer any questions the patient might have.



Also, the care provider must not withhold any information necessary for the patient to make an informed decision unless disclosure would cause the patient serious harm. In this context 'serious harm' does not imply becoming upset or decide to refuse treatment.

Timing of consent process

Obtaining informed consent cannot be an isolated event. It involves an ongoing process of keeping or in pain and therefore less likely to make a calm and reasoned decision. Where possible, you should explain risks well patients up to date with any changes in their condition and the treatments or investigation proposed. Whenever possible, the health worker should discuss treatment options at a time when the patient is best able to understand and retain the information. It is not recommended to seek consent when a patient may be stressed, sedated in advance of an intervention.



Health Professionals responsibility for seeking consent

Healthcare providers must have full understanding of the procedure or treatment, how it is carried out and the risks attached to it. If the healthcare provider does not have a full understanding of the procedure, he or she should appoint another colleague knowledgeable of the proposed investigation or treatment and understands the risks involved to inform the patient with sufficient information and time to make an educated decision to consent to the procedure or investigation.

Decision making for incompetent patients

Many patients may be incompetent to make a decision for themselves. Example, include young children, individuals affected by certain psychiatric or neurological conditions which potentially impair their decision making ability, and those who are temporarily unconscious or comatose. These patients require substitute decision-makers. Ethical issues arise in the determination of the appropriate substitute decision-makers and in the choice of criteria for decisions on behalf of incompetent patients.

Refusal of treatment

Every adult with power to decide is entitled to refuse medical treatment. The healthcare provider must respect a patient's decision to refuse treatment, even if he or she disagrees with the patient's decision. In these circumstances, the care provider should clearly explain to the patient the possible consequences of refusing treatment and offer the patient the opportunity to receive a second medical opinion if possible.

1.2.3. Adaptability

- ✓ Able to change or to be changed so as to be suitable for new needs, different conditions, etc...
- ✓ Is the ability to adjust oneself to new or changed circumstances/conditions

1.2.4. Cooperation

- ✓ It refers to the practice of people or greater entities working in common with commonly agreed upon goals and possibly methods, instead of working separately in competition.
- ✓ Is a co-working system; the work of pharmacy vocational is insignificant unless it is augmented by other health practitioners. Therefore health practice must be team work



1.2.5. Kindness and firmness

- ✓ **Kindness** – is the act or state of charitable behavior to other people.
- ✓ **Firmness** – is the faculty which stands for determination and persistence for the connection between principles and acts or preservice, determinants and resolution.

1.2.6. Dependability

This is a condition in which one develops to depend on others so that the work of other professionals and his/her would be useful to the society. In health practice there are more things to learn from people who have a lot of experience and thus, someone has to depend on the experienced to get what they possess.

1.2.7. Honesty

Being loyal: - Health practice is wide in nature involving many people and activity. For the people to be beneficiary and activities to be accomplished successfully being an honest is the primary asset to achieve

Describes the situation in which gifts are given to the pharmacists. In this part, much stress has been put on a pharmacist's attendance in work days, banning buy and selling of special products which threatens the profession, body piercing, etc.

1.2.8. Responsibility, accountability and transparency

Responsibility: Is the condition or the fact that one can shoulder obligations.

Accountability: Is the condition or fact that one can be called to answer for his wrong doings.

Transparency: This is a case in which things must run by the book (based on rules, regulations etc) rather than by what is comfortable and beneficial to one self.

1.2.9. Maintaining good report

It is important to prepare good report on the activities performed at each level so that based on the report the pertinent body may make adjustments on the health service in general.



Self-Check -2	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

Write **true** if the statement is correct or write **false** if the statement is incorrect

1. Confidentiality promotes trust between patients and health workers?
2. Kindness is the act or state of charitable behavior to other people?
3. Accountability **is** the condition or the fact that one can shoulder obligations?

Short Answer Question

4. What are rights of patient confidentiality?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 4 points

Unsatisfactory - below 4 points

Answer Sheet

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Medical Laboratory Level III	Vision :01 Sep. 2019:	Page 20 of 28
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Information Sheet-3	Medical laboratory code of conducts
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A Code of Professional Conduct for Medical Laboratory Personnel should include those practices and attitudes which characterize a professional and responsible laboratory officer and are necessary to ensure a person works to recognized standards which patients and those requesting laboratory investigations can expect to receive. It also emphasizes the professional status of medical laboratory practice.

Adopting a Code of Professional Conduct helps to remind district laboratory personnel of their responsibilities to patients, duty to uphold professional standards, and need to work with complete integrity.

- ✓ They are intended to guide and direct laboratory technicians, qualified persons and laboratory technicians in their relationships with patients, colleagues, regulatory and administrative authorities and society

Objectives

- ✓ To promote high standard of conduct and practice among laboratory professionals and patients and laboratory professionals and other health professionals.
- ✓ To state publicly the principles that forms the fundamental basis of the duties and responsibilities of the laboratory professionals.
- ✓ To safeguard the public from unethical and substandard professional practice.
- ✓ To foster the good relationship that would prevail among laboratory professionals, other health professionals and patient or the society.

Definitions

Code – is a set of rules about how people should behave or about how something must be done.

Medical Laboratory Level III	Vision :01 Sep. 2019:	Page 21 of 28
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Code of practice – is a set of written rules which explains how people working in a particular profession should behave.

Code of professional conduct for medical laboratory personnel

- Be dedicated to the use of clinical laboratory science to benefit mankind.
- Place the well-being and service of patients above your own interests.
- Be accountable for the quality and integrity of clinical laboratory services.
- Exercise professional judgment, skill, and care while meeting established standards.
- Do not misuse your professional skills or knowledge for personal gain, and never take anything from your place of work that does not belong to you.
- Be at all times courteous, patient, and considerate to patients and their relatives. Safeguard the dignity and privacy of patients.*
- Do not disclose to a patient or any unauthorized person the results of your investigations and treat with strict confidentiality any personal information that you may learn about a patient.
- Respect and work in harmony with the other members of your hospital staff or health centre team.
- Promote health care and the prevention and control of disease.
- Follow safe working practices and ensures patients and others are not put at risk. Know what to do should an accident or fire occur and how to apply emergency First Aid.
- Do not consume alcohol or take un-prescribed drugs that could interfere with your work performance during laboratory working hours or when on emergency stand-by.
- Use equipment and laboratory-ware correctly and do not waste reagents or other laboratory supplies.
- Strive to improve professional skills and knowledge and adopt scientific advances that benefit the patient and improve the delivery of test results.*
- Fulfill reliably and completely the terms and conditions of your employment.

*Taken from the Code of Ethics of the International Association of Medical Laboratory Technologists. And



Ethiopian Medical Laboratory Association (EMLA)
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Leading the Fields of Laboratory Medicine in Ethiopia

Self-Check –3

Written Test

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

Multiple choose

1. _____ is illegal transport of goods across a border unlawfully without paying necessary tax.
 - a. Corruption
 - b. Mistreating the patient
 - c. Trafficking
 - d. Drug dependence
2. All of the following is Components of unethical behavior **except.**
 - A. Alcohol-dependence
 - B. Drug dependence
 - C. Autonomy
 - D. aggressive

Short Answer Questions

3. What is EMLA?

Scenario I

A pregnant woman comes for HIV testing. Your test site has just run out of the 2nd test in the algorithm. You tell her that she will have to come back in 2 days. She becomes very emotional and explains that she has traveled a long distance after finally deciding to get tested and won't be back in the area for a long time.

Feeling sorry for her, you proceed to perform test one, and report a resulting positive test to the client.



Scenario II

At the HIV rapid testing site, you discover that you just run out of the buffer for Test 1 of the algorithm. Rather than denying testing to clients, you decide to go ahead and perform Test 1 using the buffer from kits of Test 2.

What Could Be the Consequences of...

1. A false positive HIV result?
2. A false negative result?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Answer Sheet

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-4	Professional values
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In their simplest form, ethics are the moral standards you rely on when you make a decision. They define what's right and wrong, and outline the kind of behavior that businesses should not engage in.

The reasons for having high ethical standards include:

- A higher moral within your employees and the organization
- It helps to attract new customers
- It builds higher customer loyalty
- It reduces the risk of negative press or backlash caused by doing “the wrong” things
- It helps to make a positive impact on the community

➤ **Here are some principles that form the basis of professional ethics, and are what you need to hold yourself accountable to:**

Honesty

You need to be honest in all of your actions, and every communication you make.

Being an ethical executive means you do not deceive others by misrepresenting the facts, overstating and exaggerating or only giving partial truths.

Integrity

Being ethical in profession means maintaining a high level of personal integrity. This is how you earn the trust of others, whether they are your customers, team or your superiors.

In this definition integrity means having a consistent character that is demonstrated by an alignment of your thoughts, words and action.



Loyalty

You need to be loyal to your profession, your team and yourself, while operating within a strong moral compass. If you demonstrate your loyalty it builds trust, and shows that you place a high value on advancing the interests of both the company and your colleagues.

Fair: - In all of your actions, you must strive to be fair and just.

Being an ethical executive means that you are committed to being fair, employ justice in your decisions and treat all people equally, with tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Being fair also means being open minded, admitting when they have made a mistake, and adjusting their beliefs and positions when it is appropriate.

Accountable: -Being ethical means holding yourself accountable and acknowledging and accepting personal accountability for their decisions, and any consequences.

Self-Check –4	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List at least 3 reasons for having high ethical standards?
2. Define honesty, integrity and Loyalty?
3. In their simplest form, _____are the moral standards you rely on when you make a decision.
4. _____is a set of written rules which explains how people working in a particular profession should behave.



Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 2 points

Answer Sheet

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Prepared By

No	Name	Educational Background	LEVEL	Region	College	Email	Phone Number
1	Kalicha Boru	Laboratory	B	Oromia	Nagelle HSC	boru9683@gmail.com	0912493885
2	Furo Beshir	Laboratory	A	Harari	Harar HSC	nebi.furo@gmail.com	0911739970
3	Motuma Chali	Laboratory	B	Oromia	Nekemte HSC	lammiifcaalii@gmail.com	0938456753
4	Abdirahman Mahad	Laboratory	A	Somali	Jigjiga HSC	abdirahman7584@gmail.com	0911044715
5	Adisu Tesfaye		B	Somali	Jigjiga HSC	adistesfaye21@gmail.com	0931747320
6	Kebebe Tadesse	Laboratory	B	BGRS	Pawi HSC	no	0926841290
7	Tagel Getachew	Laboratory	A	Harari	Harar HSC	tagegetachew@gmail.com	0915746748