

CRITICAL THINKING ASSESSMENT APPLIED TO ETHICS: Graduates will be able to apply Ethical Analysis and Reasoning.

The student...	1 Unacceptable	2 Acceptable	3 Proficient
1. States a specific ETHICAL conclusion** (i.e., a claim, thesis, position, problem, or solution [if available, since problems don't always have solutions]).	Does not effectively identify the ETHICAL conclusion (or sub-conclusions).	For the most part, effectively identifies the ETHICAL conclusion (or sub-conclusions).	Effectively identifies the ETHICAL conclusion (or sub-conclusions).
2. States the premises** (i.e., reasons) that supposedly support the conclusion.	Does not effectively identify premises.	For the most part, effectively identifies premises.	Effectively identifies premises.
3. Evaluates each argument presented according to the standards of logical thinking and critical analysis.*	Does not effectively evaluate each argument formed by the premises and corresponding conclusion.	For the most part, effectively evaluates each argument formed by the premises and corresponding conclusion.	Effectively evaluates each argument formed by the premises and corresponding conclusion.
4. Does not commit the Fact-Value (or Is-Ought) Fallacy***	Always commits the Fact-Value (or Is-Ought) Fallacy	Sometimes commits the Fact-Value (or Is-Ought) Fallacy	Never commits the Fact-Value (or Is-Ought) Fallacy
1. Considered holistically, the student demonstrates the ability to apply Ethical Analysis and Reasoning.	Does not demonstrate the ability to apply Ethical Analysis and Reasoning.	For the most part, demonstrates the ability to apply Ethical Analysis and Reasoning.	Consistently and effectively demonstrates the ability to apply Ethical Analysis and Reasoning.

Note:

*The **standards of logical thinking and critical analysis** are given by the rules from Anthony Weston's, *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd ed. (Here summarized and framed as the following three questions for assessment purposes):

1] If arguing **inductively**, is the argument **strong** or **weak**?

2] If arguing **deductively**, is the argument **valid** or **invalid**?

3] Are the premises **true**? (**Sound** argument = **valid** argument + **true** premises; **Cogent** argument = **strong** argument + **true** premises)

For an **ethical argument, the **conclusion** **MUST** express a **value** (i.e., about something being right (or wrong) or good (or bad)) **related** to some value expressed **by at least one premise** of the argument. Besides saying something about the relevant **facts** about the matter under consideration, the **premises** **MUST** also say something about **value**—about something being right (or wrong) or good (or bad) to help establish a conclusion about something being right (or wrong) or good (or bad).

***If the above (point**) is not taken into account, then we *do not* have an **ethical** argument. This mistake is called the **Fact-Value (or Is-Ought) Fallacy**—referring to David Hume’s *Fact-Value (or Is-Ought)* distinction (1978, Book III, Part I. *A treatise of human nature*. 2nd ed. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford University Press.). Specifically, we cannot get *value* from *facts* because the conclusion describes something that is not contained in the premises. The premises say nothing about what ought to be the case. Since factual premises cannot establish any value judgment, the principles and rules of logic are not applicable to ethical reasoning. So, reason cannot tell us what is right. But, reason *can* tell us what is right if the conclusion expresses a value related to some value expressed by the premise or premises of the argument. The premise or premises, then, would say something about being right (or wrong), and, correspondingly, could help establish a conclusion about being right (or wrong). Accordingly, we can take care of the *Fact-Value* problem by adding an explicit value-premise (since it is implied, concealed, or unavailable). For instance (premise no. 3 is added in the following to make it an **ethical** argument),

- 1) Chief executive officers (CEOs) receive generous salaries. <FACT>
- 2) Some CEOs are using their positions to make a quick buck in the form of a bribe. <FACT>
- 3) Offering or accepting a bribe is *wrong*. <VALUE>

- 4) Thus, it is *wrong* for a bribe to be offered or accepted in this case. <VALUE>

Dr. Isidoro Talavera