

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES
MEDIA ETHICS (IJM 1202)
MAY 2005 EXAMINATION
TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS**

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Section A is **compulsory**
2. Answer **any three** questions in section B
3. Start each answer on a new page.
4. Poor spelling and grammar will be penalised.

SECTION A: COMPULSORY

Question 1

- a) There are rumours about a Member of Parliament dealing in cocaine. Your reporter visits the MP's private home and poses as a buyer. He gets a photographer to use a long lens camera to photograph the deal. To make sure that there are pictures taken, the reporter takes a hidden camera and films secretly. He gets the information, processes the pictures and writes his story.

As an editor would you publish the story? Give reasons for your answer.

[10 marks]

- b) You are covering a story for a daily newspaper about a report which is highly critical of the government's land reform programme. The government department concerned cannot provide a minister for interview at a short notice to explain and defend the policy. Would you proceed to publish the story and what sort of ethical challenges would you face?

[10 marks]

- c) Read the following story carefully and answer the questions below.

Opposition party to bomb major buildings

THE main opposition political party is planning massive terrorist attacks that will bring down some tall buildings in the capital city and Bulawayo in a series of bombings.

Targeted are five tall buildings in the capital city and three in Bulawayo. One of the buildings houses several commercial banks while another was recently acclaimed as an architectural masterpiece.

Sources said several businesses organisation close to the opposition party had been told to vacate offices housed in the buildings on the list. Some have already moved out of the offices in the targeted buildings over the last month, sources said.

What ethical issues does the story raise and as an editor explain whether or not you would publish such a story?

[10 marks]

TOTAL: [40 marks]

SECTION B: ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS

Question 2

- a) What ethical issues are raised by business sponsorship of newspaper editions?
- b) In relation to media ethics, illustrate how advertisers can abuse the media.

[20 marks]

Question 3

“Stories are important because they sell newspapers; therefore they will be bought, stolen, distorted, spun and over dramatised and should all else fail they are invented to woo the public.” Discuss the ethical challenges raised by this statement.

[20 marks]

Question 4

Discuss the challenges affecting ethical reporting in Zimbabwe.

[20 marks]

Question 5

To what extent does the Media and Information Commission help promote ethical reporting in Zimbabwe?

[20 marks]

Question 6

Discuss the claim that balance and objectivity in journalism are idealistic and generally difficult to attain.

[20 marks]