

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MEDIA STUDIES
BSc Honours degree in Journalism and Media Studies
IJM 1212: Media Ethics
JUNE 2012 SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS
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

Question 1

Read the following story, which was published and answer all the questions below.

You receive a tip off from a police officer who does not want to be named, that a prominent lawyer was reportedly last night seen at a well known brothel house in the city. He was not arrested but several police officers confirmed to your informant that he was there. No one from the police or neighbours is willing to go on the record about it. Your editor has assigned you to investigate whether the lawyer was involved in illegal activity as this is clearly a great story.

- i. What ethical issues does this story raise? (10 marks)
- ii. In writing the story, how would you ensure that it is overall balanced, honest and fair? (10 marks)
- iii. What is the difference between "public interest" and "the right to know"? (10 marks)
- iv. To what extent do public figures have a right to privacy? (10 marks)

Total [40 marks]

SECTION B

Question 2

Choose one theory of ethics and show its contribution to the understanding and practice of journalism ethics. [20 marks]

Questions 3

You are a sports reporter for a major daily newspaper. One of the biggest Premier Soccer League clubs is holding an annual general meeting and elections for the chairmanship and secretary general for the club in two weeks time. The outgoing chairman of the club, a city businessman who is seeking a re-election runs a popular leisure spot. You arrive at the leisure spot

with your family and the outgoing chairman offers to pay for your food and drinks for the whole afternoon outing and you accept. The following day, your editor assigns you to interview the outgoing chairman.

- i. Would you do the story? Why and why not? (12 marks)
- ii. What four key ethical challenges does the situation above raises and how should journalists deal with each of them? (8 marks)

Total [20 marks]

Question 4

- i. Identify common mistakes that journalists make when covering suicide, grief and disasters. (10 marks)
- ii. Discuss ways that journalists can minimise the harm cited above. (10 marks)

Total [20 marks]

Question 5

a. Explain the implications of unethical reporting to the following:

- i. Newspapers (5 marks)
- ii. Journalists (5 marks)
- iii. Readers (5 marks)
- iv. Advertisers (5 marks)

Total [20 marks]

Question 6

Critically evaluate the importance of Codes of Ethics in the practice of journalism profession. [20 marks]