Ethics Scenarios (Student Copy)

Scenario #1

After you grade a midterm exam worth 40% of the semester grade, a student approaches you regarding her score. She is one point short of passing and presents a reasonable explanation for why she selected one answer over another. After considering her request, you decide to award her the additional point and ask her not to tell anyone else.

As she walks away, another student approaches you and says, “I only missed passing by two points. If you are giving points to her, shouldn’t I receive consideration as well?”

Scenario #2

You are the instructor of a fire service class. A higher-ranking member of your department who is enrolled as a student in your class frequently receives work-related phone calls that require him to leave the classroom, causing him to miss a significant amount of instructional time.

At the end of the course, another student approaches you and asks why that individual achieved course completion despite attending substantially fewer hours of instruction than the rest of the class.

Scenario #3

You are team-teaching a course in hydraulics and have recently administered a midterm exam. After grading the exams, you determine that the mean score is 65%. The minimum passing score is 70%.

When you submit the exams to the lead instructor, he states that you were too harsh in your scoring and informs you that he intends to award everyone an additional 10%. He is the senior member of the instructional team and the person responsible for inviting you to teach the course. This is your first time teaching the class, and you value the opportunity.

Scenario #4

Before a night drill, you discover that another instructor smells of alcohol. The instructor appears functional and insists they are fine, canceling the evolution would impact 30 students, and staffing is limited.

Scenario #5

After a full day of high-intensity live-fire training with the recruit academy—including body camera footage review, thermal imaging debriefs, and performance tracking in the department's learning management system—you and your cadre decide to visit a popular downtown brewery to decompress and review the day's evolution outcomes.

While seated, you notice several recruits across the patio, some still wearing academy T-shirts. They are posting clips from training on social media.

Shortly after your beverages arrive, the server informs you they have been paid for. The manager introduces himself as the father of one of the recruits in your academy class. He explains that his son has been struggling academically and physically and expresses appreciation for everything you are doing for him.

Scenario #6

You are the instructor of a State Fire Training Company Officer course when a respected battalion chief from a partner agency enrolls. Throughout the class, the chief dominates discussions, dismisses opposing viewpoints, and performs poorly during graded ethical-decision-making scenarios—particularly those involving policy compliance and documentation.

During a final simulation, the chief makes a command decision that achieves tactical success but clearly violates established policy and exposes the agency to liability. When you provide corrective feedback, the chief publicly challenges you, arguing that the curriculum is unrealistic and overly academic.

Later, your academy chief advises that failing this student could strain interagency relationships and negatively impact future training contracts. Other students are observing how the situation will be handled.

Scenario #7

You are the instructor for a State Fire Training course that is operating on a tight schedule to meet all mandated instructional hours and skill competencies. After the first week, you realize the class is behind schedule due to extended discussions and the need to provide remediation for several struggling students.

To remain on track, you assign a significant amount of homework outside of class, including required reading, a written leadership reflection, and a list of precourse knowledge questions originally intended for in-class discussion.

Several students approach you privately and explain that they are working 72-hour shifts, balancing mandatory overtime and family responsibilities, and believe the added workload is unreasonable. A student with a disability will not have access to support needed outside of the classroom and complains that the homework is inequitable.

Scenario #8

You are an SFT registered instructor enrolled in an SFT certified course for professional development. Early in the course, you observe serious concerns: the instructor routinely dismisses the 40-hour class early, skips or shortens required curriculum elements, tests informally, and dismisses the importance of SFT compliance by stating, “The State doesn’t really check the hours that closely.” The instructor also makes disparaging remarks about certain fire agencies.

As an SFT instructor who has completed Ethical Leadership training, you understand that course completion depends on compliance with the *State Fire Training Procedures Manual*. However, the instructor is highly respected, and raising concerns could damage professional relationships.

Scenario #9

During a live-fire preparation drill, instructors mock a recruit who is struggling with hose advancement. The student is publicly embarrassed while other students laugh. The instructors justify the behavior as “building thick skin.”

Scenario #10

You are an instructor assigned to a fire academy and begin receiving informal reports that a small group of senior recruits has been “mentoring” a struggling classmate through what they describe as tradition—early morning corrective physical training sessions, sarcastic public criticism during drills, and a group text thread filled with memes targeting the recruit’s performance.

The targeted recruit insists they are “fine” and says they do not want to be perceived as weak or jeopardize their standing. Other recruits privately admit the behavior feels like hazing but that they fear retaliation or ostracism if they speak up. Senior cadre members argue that the fire service is tough, the behavior builds resilience, and previous academies operated similarly without complaint. The recruits’ performance has improved slightly, and no formal complaint has been filed.

Scenario #11

You are the instructor for a State Fire Training course. One of your strongest practical skills performers, who works in your agency, has begun missing instruction, arriving late, and appearing distracted during evolutions.

Privately, you learn that the student is dealing with significant personal issues at home. The student asks you not to share the details and insists he can “push through.” Meanwhile, other students have noticed his absences and question why he appears to be receiving special treatment, suggesting favoritism and raising concerns about fairness and standards.

Scenario #12: Use of AI Without Verification

You as the instructor are using artificial intelligence (AI) to generate exam questions and lecture materials without verifying accuracy. Some questions conflict with SFT curriculum and may violate copyright standards. Several students notice and complain to you about the incorrect content.