



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the similarities and differences between the code of ethics and code of conduct. (250 words)

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Approach

- Briefly explain the two Codes.
- Explain the similarities and differences between them.
- Conclude by mentioning the need for appropriate mechanisms to implement both the codes particularly for civil servants.

Introduction

- **Code of Ethics:** It is a set of guidelines containing core ethical values, principles and ideals of the organization. It gives a general idea of what types of behavior and decisions are acceptable and encouraged at a business or organization.
 - For example, it might stipulate that ABC Corporation is committed to environmental protection and green initiatives.
- **Code of Conduct:** It is more focused and defines how employees or members should act in specific situations. It outlines specific practices and behavior that are required or restricted under the organization.
 - For example, it might forbid sexual harassment, racial intimidation or viewing inappropriate or unauthorized content on company computers.

Body

Differences between Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct:

	Code of Ethics	Code of Conduct
1.	It is general and broad in nature.	It is specific and narrow in range.
2.	It governs decision making.	It governs actions.
3.	It is focused on values and principles.	It is focused on compliance and rules etc
4.	It is publicly available and addressed to anyone with an interest in an institution's activities.	It is generally addressed to and intended for employees alone.
5.	They are wide-ranging and non-specific, enable employees to make independent judgments about the most appropriate course of action.	They generally require little judgment; One has to obey or incur a penalty, and the code provides a fairly clear set of expectations about which actions are required, acceptable or prohibited.

Similarities between Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct:

- Both are similar as they are used in an attempt to encourage specific forms of behaviour by employees.

- Code of Conduct originates from the code of ethics, and it converts the rules into specific guidelines that must be followed by the members of the organization.
- Both can serve as a guide to handle situations like avoiding conflict of interest, protecting the organization's assets, anti-bribery and corruption and improving work culture ethics.

Hence, there is a significant overlap between the two codes.

Way Forward

There is a need to set up appropriate **institutional mechanisms** to promote and enforce the values and code of conduct and to evaluate the extent to which they are incorporated and upheld throughout any organization.

The Code of conduct for civil servants does not have a **statement of values** which should guide the civil servants in the discharge of their duties. There is an urgent need that a Code of Ethics be drawn up for civil servants incorporating the core values of integrity, merit and excellence in public service as recommended by **Hota Committee** report 2004.

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