



Ethics: some views from young professional accountants

SURVEY

HIGHLIGHTS

Ethical behaviour in business is fundamental for public trust and confidence. These are long standing foundations of the accountancy profession. We aim to stimulate debate on the role of ethics in the profession by exploring what 730 young accountancy professionals think about this focus.

Their input gives insight into the reasons why they join the profession, the values that are most important to them, whether they encounter unethical behaviour at work, and ideas as to how they can be better supported in dealing with such situations.

This does not only provide a better understanding of what ethics means for young professional accountant, but give experienced practitioners insight on the crucial role they can play in helping young professionals apply ethical behaviour.

Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Career choice	2
The values of the accountancy profession	4
Ethical behaviour	6
Unethical behaviour	9
How to apply ethical behaviour	11
Conclusion	14
Annex I: Respondents' profiles	15
Annex II: Survey questions	17

Introduction

Professional ethics is the bedrock of the accountancy profession. Ethical behaviour in business is fundamental for public trust and confidence. These are long standing foundations of the accountancy profession and we may wonder what young professionals think about this focus. Is it part of the reason why they chose to enter the accountancy profession? Do they experience ethical issues in their roles?

To try to answer these questions, we surveyed 730 young accountancy professionals in Europe. The results give insight into the reasons why they join the profession, the values that are most important to them, whether they encounter unethical behaviour at work, and ideas as to how they can be better supported in dealing with such situations.

The aim of this paper is to share the main results of the survey. It is also to stimulate debate on the role of ethics in the profession and to help obtain a better understanding of what ethics means for young professional accountants. Very few projects have focused on this segment of professionals to date. The survey may also provide useful insight for experienced practitioners on the crucial role they can play in helping young professionals apply ethical behaviour.

The paper starts with a discussion on the career choice of young professionals. It then turns to the values that are associated with the profession and how respondents perceive ethical behaviour. The third and fourth sections focus on whether respondents have experienced unethical behaviour in business and on what kind of assistance they need to help them resolve ethical dilemmas.

Methodology

This project is an initiative of the Professional Ethics and Competences Working Party (PEC WP) of the Federation of European Accountants (FEE). In accordance with its mission “standing for trust and integrity”, the Federation strives to promote and preserve the integrity of the profession in dealing with issues linked to professional ethics¹.

When developing the initial survey questions, collecting the responses, and analysing the results, we did not follow a pure scientific method. FEE’s objective was not to carry out an academic study, but to open a conversation on the role of ethics in the accountancy profession and to have a sense of what ethics means for young professionals.

Some results are difficult to interpret due to the very heterogeneous nature of the respondents. Certain respondents work in the public sector, others in business or public practice, and their experience as professional accountants is very diverse – from none to fifteen years. Some respondents are qualified as professional accountants and some are not.

A number of respondents’ quotes are included in this paper. While some of these are comforting, others are rather confronting and aim to initiate discussions. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that these quotes are from individuals and that these ideas are not necessarily shared by other respondents. They should be considered only as illustrative.

¹ More information on the PEC WP can be found at: <http://www.fee.be/our-work/ethics.html>

Career choice

This section explores why young professionals choose a career in accountancy.

Presentation of the results

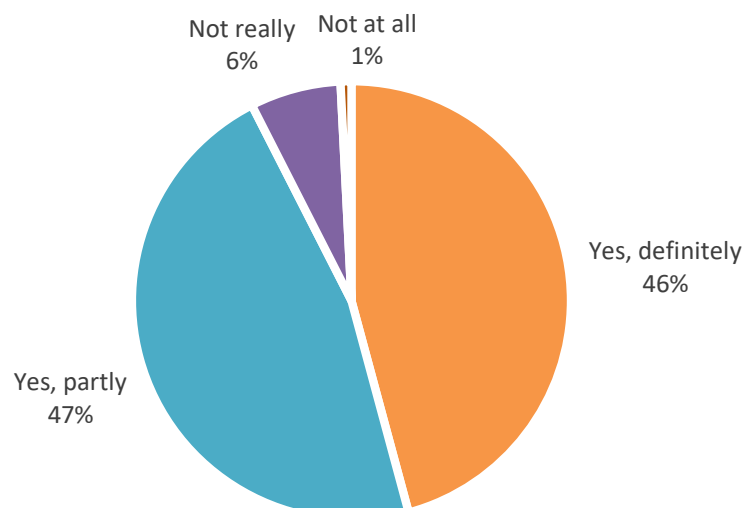
What were the 3 main reasons why you envisioned this profession for your career?

Answer Options	1st main reason	2nd main reason	3rd main reason	Response count
Good career progression	126	158	124	408
Interested in the subject matter	232	86	70	388
Open many doors	83	116	113	312
Good first work experience	98	74	63	235
Be part of a values-driven profession	44	53	72	169
Be part of a regulated profession	33	57	71	161
Structured career path	42	55	60	157
Work-life balance	33	31	43	107
International environment	12	42	49	103
Strong sense of public interest	21	44	33	98

For most respondents, the 1st main reason for envisioning a career in the profession is an interest in the subject matter. The 2nd and 3rd main reasons are the career progression opportunities available.

Many respondents chose the accountancy profession for reasons that are related to the ethical side of the profession. For example, 169 respondents chose “be part of a values-driven profession” as one of their three main reasons for pursuing a career in accountancy.

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR CAREER CHOICE SO FAR?

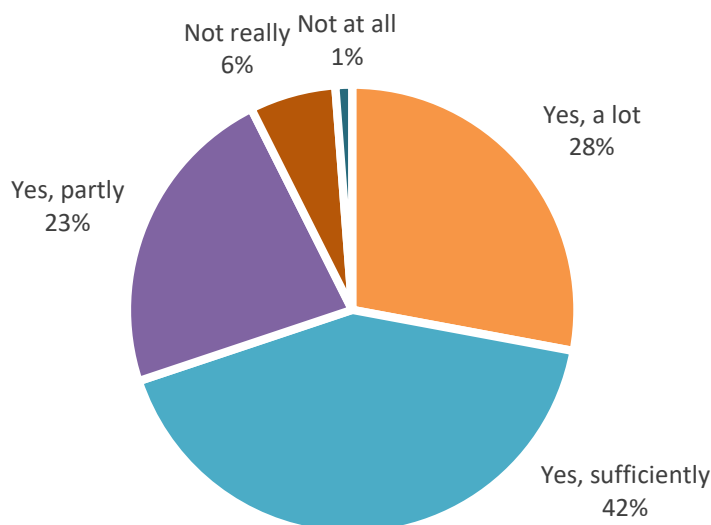


On a positive note, 46% of respondents are definitely happy with their career choice, and 47% are partly happy. Only 7% of respondents are not happy with their choice.

Aside from filling in the multiple-choice question, respondents could provide comments to explain their answers, which 131 respondents did.

- Of the respondents indicating being definitely happy with their career choice, 42 commented. The most recurrent explanation is the availability of career opportunities in the profession.
- Of the respondents indicating being partly happy with their career choice, 65 commented. The most recurrent explanation for not being completely happy is the absence of a satisfactory work life balance. To a lesser extent there is also a level of dissatisfaction with the level of remuneration in combination with the unsatisfactory work life balance.
- Of the respondents indicating being not really happy with their career choice, 22 commented. There is no clear recurring explanation.
- Of the respondents indicating being not at all happy with their career choice, only three commented. The explanations for their job dissatisfaction are low remuneration combined with the absence of a good work-life balance, and dissatisfaction with their management.

IN YOUR COUNTRY, ARE THERE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSIONALS?



28% of respondents believe there are a lot of career opportunities. Furthermore, 42% and 23% of respondents believe this is sufficiently or partly the case. Less than 10% of respondents believe there are not really any or not any career opportunities at all.

It is worth mentioning that the proportion of respondents who indicated they had a lot of career opportunities is significantly lower when they are not a member of an institute (20% vs. 30%).

Our take

We are encouraged by the fact that over 90% of the respondents are completely or partly happy with their career choice. Another positive result is that around two thirds of the respondents believe there are either sufficient or a lot of career opportunities.

These results show that the accountancy profession can provide an interesting and satisfying career for young professionals. However, certain comments by those that are less satisfied with their career choice indicate that there is still room for improvement, in particular with regards to work-life balance.

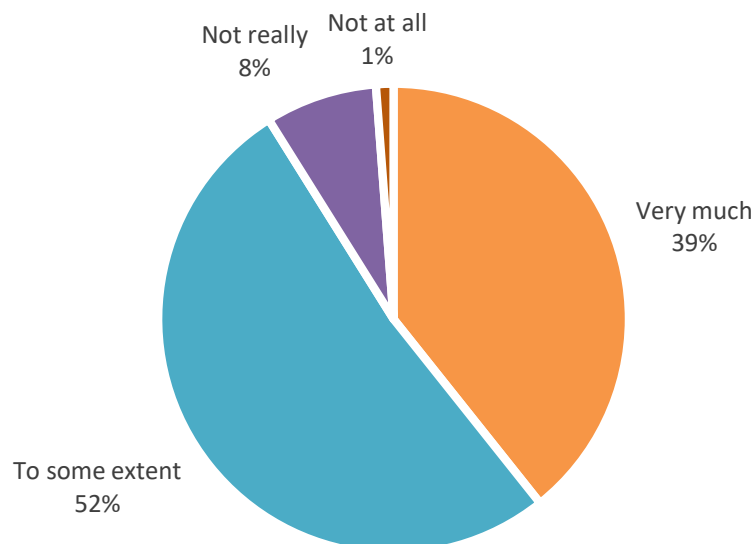
This section shows that the accountancy profession provides lots of career opportunities across Europe. For many respondents, the role of ethics plays an important reason for joining the profession, but is not the main one.

The values of the accountancy profession

This section explores what young professionals think about the values of the profession.

Presentation of the results

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU CONSIDER ACCOUNTANCY TO BE A VALUES-DRIVEN PROFESSION?



Respectively, 39% and 52% of the respondents believe that the accountancy profession is very much, or at least to some extent, values-driven. Thus, the majority largely agrees that values play an important role in the profession. But what are those values?

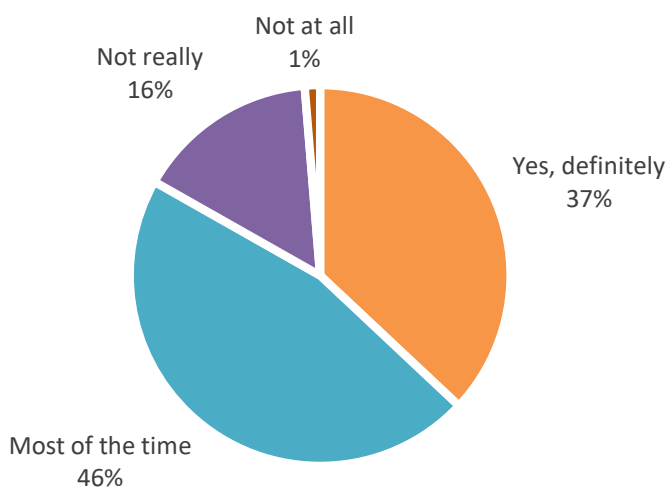
According to you, what are the most important values of the accountancy profession?

Answer Options	1st most important	2nd most important	3rd most important	Response count
Professional competence	239	155	81	475
Integrity	214	96	59	369
Ethical behaviour	35	78	89	202
Professional behaviour	36	64	80	180
Independence	32	52	88	172
Objectivity	21	68	73	162
High commitment to get things right	38	50	47	135
Team effort towards a common goal	21	29	24	74
Commitment towards public interest	14	16	29	59
Placing the interests of the company/organisation/accountancy firm above personal ones	8	14	20	42
Placing the interests of clients above personal ones	6	15	17	38

Most respondents chose professional competence as either their first or second most important value. Integrity is the second most important value, and ethical behaviour is ranked as the third most important.

These results are not surprising as professional competence and integrity are two of the five fundamental principles to which professional accountants adhere – as per the Code of Ethics of the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA)².

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO SERVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST?



² <https://www.ethicsboard.org/iesba-code>

The five fundamental principles include integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, professional behaviour.

37% of respondents believe to be contributing to serving the public interest. Only 1% think the opposite. The greatest proportion of respondents (46%) believe to be contributing to serving the public interest most of the time.

Aside from filling in the multiple-choice question, respondents could provide comments to explain their answer. 68 respondents did so. A number of such comments are presented below to provide an indication as to why respondents chose a particular answer:

- Yes, definitely: “Accountants assist to eliminate or reduce corruption”; “Public interest is the basis of our work and hence also the basis of my daily work”.
- Most of the time: “We protect the shareholders of a company from being misled. This leads to sensible investment, the protection of jobs, and therefore the protection of the public interest”; “For too many involved persons it's the money that motivates and not all the other noble objectives”; “Accountants or auditors contribute to serving the public interest, whilst tax advisors sometimes do not in my opinion”; “Auditors can't be independent if the client pays their fees”.
- Not really: “Most of the time, we put the interests of clients above everything else which leads to unprofessional decision-making”; “In practice much time is spent on trying to hide anything that might appear negative about the firm from the shareholders and the public.”
- Not at all: “The current audit set-up means senior management puts pressure on accountants not to do their best to accurately reflect financial performance”.

Our take

The positive response to the question on whether the profession is values-driven highlights that young professionals feel that they are part of a profession where values are strategically important.

We welcome that most respondents believe that through their work they do contribute to serving the public interest. However, comments provided by some respondents indicate that there is an ongoing challenge of reconciling the public and the client’s interest, with some respondents referring to financial pressure.

This section shows that young professionals recognise accountancy as a values-driven profession. In particular, professional competence, ethical behaviour and integrity feature among the most important values. The results show that most respondents believe they are either definitely, or most of the time, contributing to serving the public interest.

Ethical behaviour

This section explores what ethical behaviour constitutes for young professionals and how it is experienced in practice.

Presentation of the results

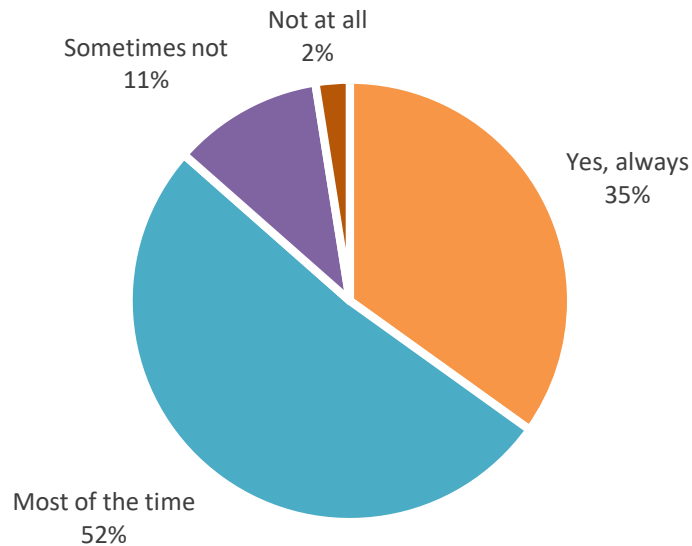
Via an open question, respondents clarified what constitutes ethical behaviour for them.

For several respondents, ethical behaviour is “acting in accordance with laws, ethics codes or values”. Ethical behaviour is also considered to be “about doing the right thing in all circumstances”. One respondent notes that “Ethical behaviour is trying to do the right thing, even when no one is watching or monitoring.” The ‘right thing’ can be acting with integrity, objectivity, independence, or honesty.

Acting in accordance with the law or with ethics is not always considered to be the same thing. For example, for one respondent “Ethical behaviour is when I respect the written laws and the moral laws at the same time. In my opinion, if you respect only the written laws, [...] [the] situation would be legal, but not necessarily ethical.”³

What is considered to be ethical behaviour can vary from person to person, or from organisation to organisation.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND "ETHICAL" IN THE SAME WAY AS YOUR COMPANY/ORGANISATION/ACCOUNTANCY FIRM?



35% of the respondents believe to have always the same understanding of ethical behaviour as their workplace. For 52% of respondents, this is the case most of the time. However, for a minority, ethical behaviour is sometimes not (11%) or not at all (2%) understood in the same way.

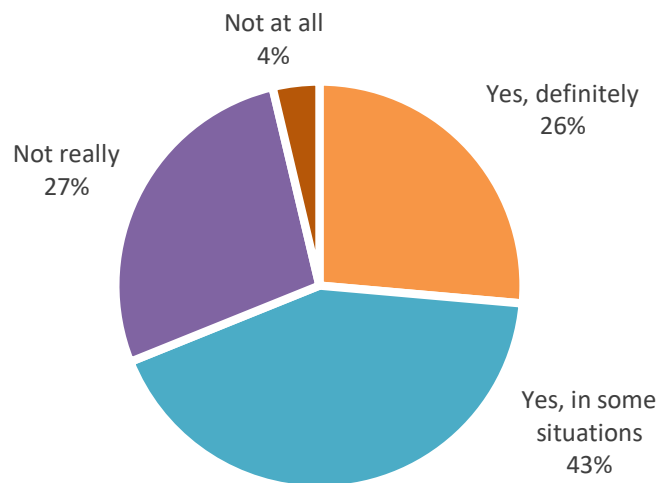
Aside from filling in the multiple-choice question, respondents could provide comments to explain their answer. 54 respondents did so. A number of such comments are presented below to provide an indication as to why respondents chose a particular answer:

- Yes, always: “If not, I wouldn’t be working in this company anymore”; “My organisation taught me ethical behaviour and why this is so important”.
- Most of the time: “I worked with companies which seemed to give high importance to ethics, others not”; “My firm upholds high standards of ethical behaviour in our main processes, but there are times where I take a different point of view”; “I think that ethical behaviour is important, my firm thinks in the same way and encourages good behaviour”.
- Sometimes not: “Chiefs are money-driven”; “Commercial values always appear to overrule the integrity principle. The detailed regulations make these deviations possible in the sense that 'what is not forbidden is allowed'”.
- Not at all: “For me ethical behaviour is doing the right thing, for them it's being perceived to do the right thing”; “My boss likes the ‘border line’ clients/situations because he believes that working with such clients generates a lot of money”.

³ In a time of public debate over certain tax avoidance activities, it is interesting to observe that young professionals believe that ethical behaviour goes further than simply respecting the law.

Young practitioners learn about ethics and have their own views and ideas about it. However, is good ethical behaviour sufficiently applied in practice?

IS THERE A NEED TO BEHAVE MORE ETHICALLY IN YOUR DAY TO DAY JOB?



69% of the respondents indicate that either definitely, or in some situations, there is a need to behave more ethically in their day to day job. The proportion of respondents believing that this is not at all or not really the case amounts to 4% and 27% respectively.

Aside from filling in the multiple-choice question, respondents could provide comments to explain their answer. 47 respondents did so. A selection of such comments are presented below to provide an indication as to why respondents chose a particular answer:

- Not at all: “Until now I always tried to do my best to be ethically correct”; “In my opinion we act ethically every day”.
- Not really: “We're already very ethical”; “Ethics have always been a big thing”.
- Yes, in some situations: “Because of time pressure, sometimes the easy way to do things will be chosen”; “It is often more comfortable to do things in the fast way”; “Generally, I am not faced with a significant number of ethical dilemmas, however, I believe that everyone has the capability to act more ethically”.
- Yes, definitely: “The common sense seems to be: ‘There can be no late findings in an audit’ or ‘Even though it would be required by standards, the client will never take this adjustment. Don't you know how important this client is for our own financials!’ - this really shocks me over and over again”.

Our take

The results of this section show that there is always room to improve ethical behaviour in the workplace. The comments reveal that some respondents deplore the focus of their firm and/or company on profits or on compliance with the law instead of on ethical behaviour. Furthermore, several respondents consider time pressure as a stumbling block for ethical behaviour.

Some respondents touch upon compliance with the law and argue that simple compliance with the law may fall short of expectations around ethical behaviour.

We share this point of view. Integrity is one of the fundamental principles of ethics and involves going further than mere compliance with laws and regulations. Through its projects, the Federation aims to promote ethical

behaviour in the profession. Integrity of our profession is the bedrock of our license to operate. For example, in our *Discussion Paper on Integrity* (2009), we promote integrity in professional life and provide a number of practical suggestions to this end.⁴

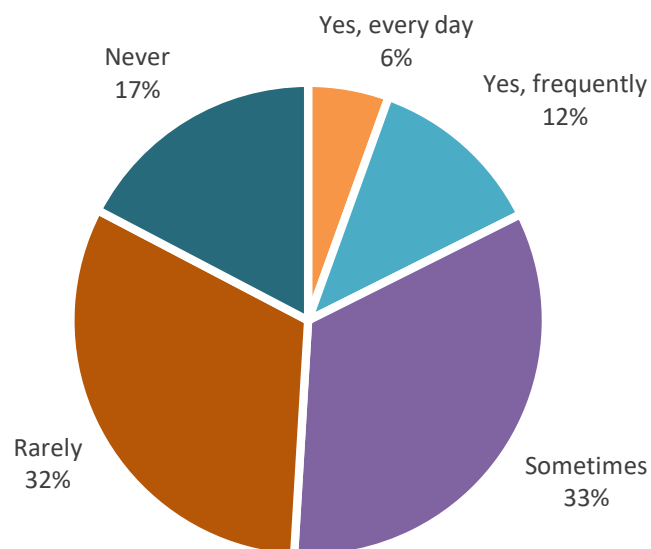
Ethical behaviour is associated with acting in accordance with values and doing the right thing under all circumstances. Respondents understand ethical behaviour in the same way as their workplace in most cases. However, they also believe there is a need to improve the application of ethics on the job.

Unethical behaviour

This section explores types of unethical behaviour and with whom it is experienced.

Presentation of the results

DO YOU OBSERVE UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN YOUR JOB?



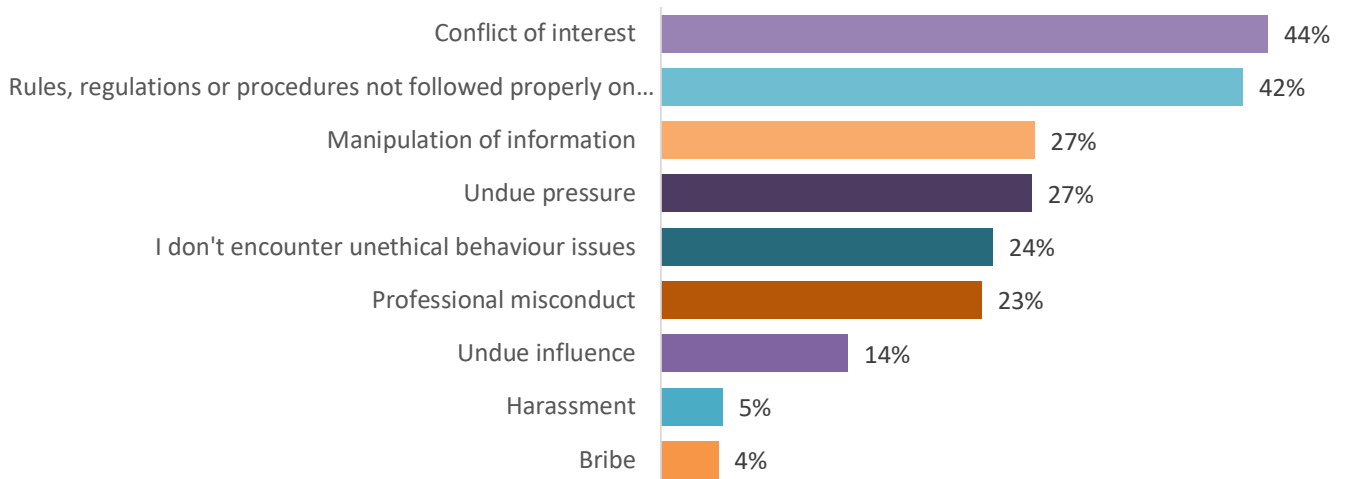
Almost half of the respondents report rarely (32%) or never (17%) observing unethical behaviour in their job. However, nearly a fifth experience it frequently or even every day. This shows that young professionals are likely to be exposed to unethical behaviour. This question can also be seen as highly subjective and therefore interpreted in different ways.

The percentage of respondents saying that they do not observe unethical behaviour fluctuates in the different charts of this section (from 17% to 24% and 25%). These differences are due to inconsistent responses received. The more concrete the question is (with a list of types of unethical behaviour encountered or a list of possible counterparts), the less the respondents report as having encountered unethical behaviour.

⁴ This publication can be found at: <http://www.fee.be/library/list/37-ethics/590-integrity-in-professional-ethics-a-discussion-paper-missing-link.html>

The proportion of respondents that never experience unethical behaviour is significantly higher when they are not part of an institute (24% vs. 14%), which may mean that they are less cognisant of unethical behaviour issues. To better prepare practitioners for how to deal with such situations, it is important to know what kind of unethical behaviour they are observing.

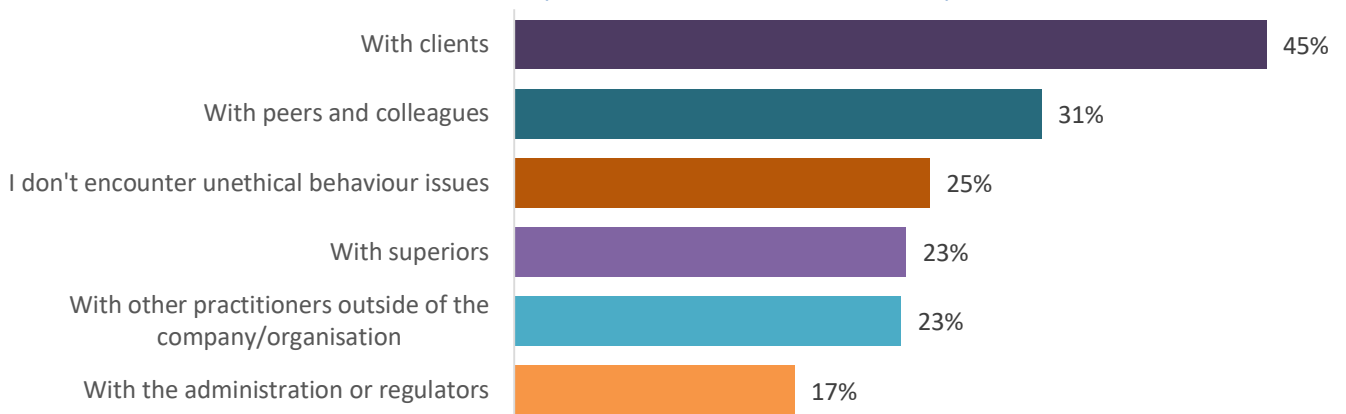
WHAT KIND OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR DO YOU OBSERVE? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



Unethical behaviour comes in many forms. 44% of young professionals seem to observe conflicts of interest and a further 42% to witness rules, regulations, or procedures not being properly followed. Furthermore, around a quarter of the respondents report witnessing the manipulation of information (27%), undue pressure (27%), and/or professional misconduct (23%).

Respondents working in an accountancy firm report significantly more to have observed undue pressure or conflicts of interests than manipulation of information. On the other hand, respondents working in a private sector company indicate significantly more to have observed manipulation of information than undue pressure. Overall, respondents in a private sector company report proportionally significantly more to have witnessed manipulation of information than their peers in an accountancy firm (32% vs. 22%).

WITH WHOM DO YOU OBSERVE UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



Almost half of the respondents (45%) report observing unethical behaviour by clients. This makes clients the most chosen answer. Respondents also report observing unethical behaviour with peers and colleagues (31%), superiors (23%), and other practitioners outside the company/organisation (23%). Moreover, the administration or regulators are also reported as behaving unethically according to a substantial minority (17%).

Our take

As mentioned above on methodology, some results are difficult to interpret. It is particularly true for this section on unethical behaviour. Unethical behaviour can be understood in very different ways by a population of respondents that is not homogeneous with diverse profiles, backgrounds, cultures and experiences. Helping young practitioners dealing with unethical behaviour remains an important challenge for the accountancy profession. The following section provides some insight into how this can be addressed.

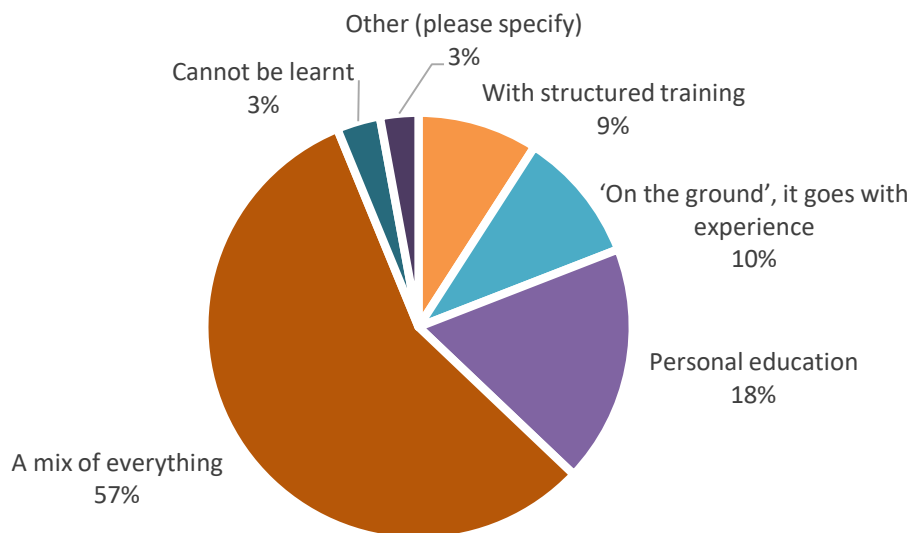
This section shows that young professionals are likely to face unethical behaviour. Such behaviour can take many forms and can come from different parties. Respondents mostly observe unethical behaviour in the form of conflicts of interest and intentionally not properly following rules, regulations or procedures. Clients are most widely cited as displaying unethical behaviour.

How to apply ethical behaviour

The previous section showed that young professionals are likely to observe unethical behaviour. This section looks at how respondents believe they could be better prepared for behaving ethically.

Presentation of the results

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO LEARN HOW TO BEHAVE ETHICALLY?



More than half of the respondents (57%) believe that a mix of different methods should be considered in order to learn how to behave ethically. Almost a fifth of respondents (18%) give preference to personal education as a means to learn ethical behaviour. Practical experience and structured training are each perceived by around 10% of the respondents as the best way to learn ethical behaviour. Only 3% believe ethical behaviour could not be learnt.

With regards to ethics, how relevant has been the training you have received so far?

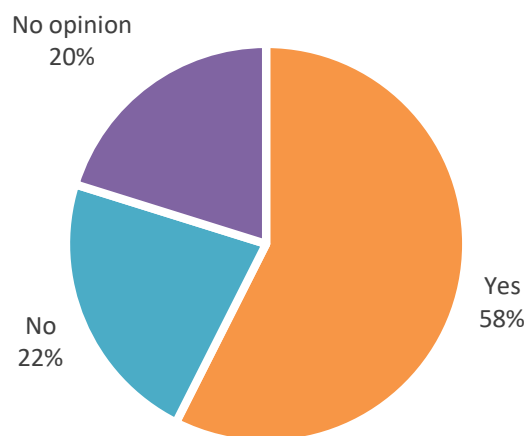
Answer Options	Very relevant	Relevant	Not relevant	Not applicable
Training in higher education	183	265	88	14
Training on the job	205	256	75	14

Over 80% of respondents consider that their training received in higher education and also on the job to be either relevant or very relevant. There is not a big difference in the relevance ascribed to both types of training.

The proportion of respondents that do not consider their training as relevant is significantly greater when respondents are not a member of an institute (17% vs. 10%).

This highlights that training by itself might not be sufficient to help young professionals to overcome challenges related to unethical behaviour. Support throughout their career is also important.

ARE YOU SUFFICIENTLY SUPPORTED IN YOUR JOB TO DEAL WITH UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR?



58% of the respondents feel they are sufficiently supported in their job to deal with unethical behaviour. However, 22% of the respondents feel they are not sufficiently supported in their job and 20% has no opinion.

Aside from filling in the multiple-choice question, respondents could provide comments to explain their answer. 47 respondents did so. A selection of such comments are presented below to provide an indication as to why respondents chose a particular answer:

- Yes: “I am always advised by my superiors to do the most ethical thing in a situation”; “There is a supporting structure in place that takes ethics issues extremely seriously.”
- No: “For an employee, it’s hard to go against the opinion of an employer”; “It remains difficult to report unethical behaviour.”
- No opinion: “Formally yes, there are codes which are perfectly written to encourage ethical behaviour. But culture on the job is not really like the principles in the codes of conduct.”; “Too much variety. Sometimes yes, but also sometimes no.”

There are different tools available to help practitioners apply ethical behaviour at work.

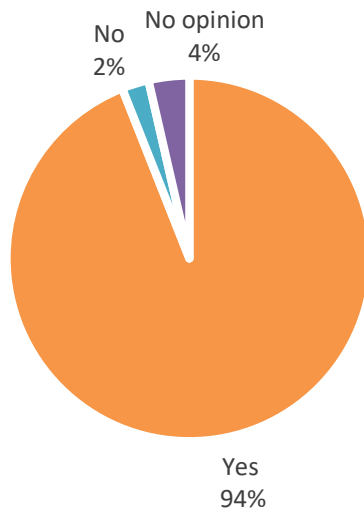
WHAT DO YOU NEED TO HELP YOU APPLY ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR?
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



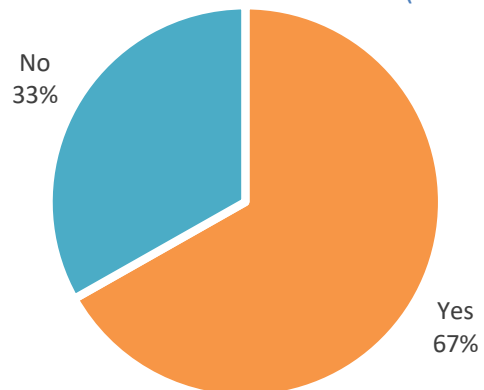
Most respondents appreciate practical guidance (44%) or mentoring (43%) to allow them to solve an ethical question. Furthermore, training (34%) and a helpdesk (30%) are perceived as useful tools.

Practical guidance can take the form of, or be based on, a code of ethics. The Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants from the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) is the best-known code of ethics at an international level.

IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION TO HAVE A CODE OF ETHICS?



DO YOU KNOW THAT THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION IS GOVERNED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ETHICS STANDARDS BOARD FOR ACCOUNTANTS® (IESBA)?



Almost all respondents (94%) consider it important for the profession to have a code of ethics. However, 33% are unaware that the profession is governed by the IESBA Code of Ethics. It is worth noting that managers working in an accountancy firm are significantly more aware of the IESBA Code than senior team members (i.e. those immediately below manager level).

Our take

While most respondents feel sufficiently supported in their job, there is room for improvement to increase support for young professionals when dealing with unethical behaviour. This is particularly important given the substantial minority of respondents that are daily (6%) or frequently (12%) encountering unethical behaviour in their job (see above).

As useful support, young professionals need tools to deal independently with unethical behaviour (guidance, training) and the ability to get advice from an experienced person (mentor, help desk). The latter seems particularly important since some respondents highlight unethical behaviour issues with superiors.

Training in higher education and on the job are both perceived as relevant. This is important to keep in mind for future initiatives aimed at improving ethical behaviour.

Most respondents believe that, to learn how to apply ethical behaviour, it is necessary to develop tools to help deal independently with unethical behaviour (guidance, training), and proper channels to get advice from an experienced person (mentor, help desk).

Most respondents consider their training as relevant or very relevant - whether in higher education or on the job. Furthermore, most respondents feel sufficiently supported on the job. However, this is not the case for a substantial minority, which indicates that there is room for improvement. Increasing practical support in specific situations is therefore important.

Conclusion

The outcome of the Federation's survey shows that ethics is important for young accountancy professionals. Respondents believe that the profession is values-driven and this plays a role in their career decision.

This does not mean that there are no challenges. Many respondents say they observe unethical behaviour, mostly by the client but also in their own organization. Moreover, they believe there is a need to increase the application of ethics to their work.

Having the right culture at the workplace is essential. In this regard, the tone at the top in all organisations plays a key role. In addition, it is also imperative to work on qualitative tools to help individuals deal with ethical dilemmas when necessary. Greater effort is also required to enable young professionals to be able to access advice from experienced persons (mentorship, help desk).

The survey also highlights the positive role institutes play in supporting practitioners. Members of institutes are more positive regarding their career opportunities and training about ethics than their colleagues who are not members of an institute.

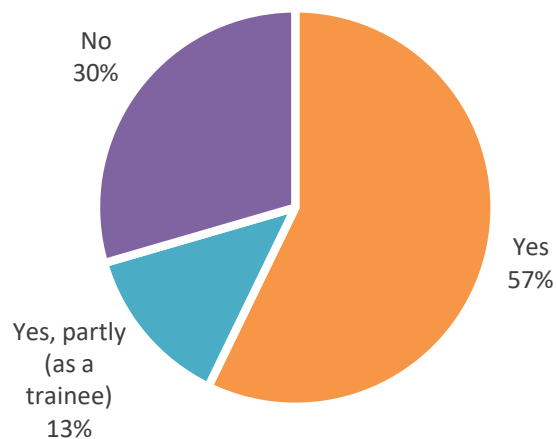
Further work could be undertaken to look into how to further empower young practitioners in speaking up when confronted with unethical behaviour. It might also be useful to develop tools to advance the understanding of what objectively constitutes unethical behaviour, and how to detect and deal with the most frequently cited forms of unethical behaviour.

Annex I: Respondents' profiles

The 730 respondents come from 28 European countries. They are on average in their early thirties.

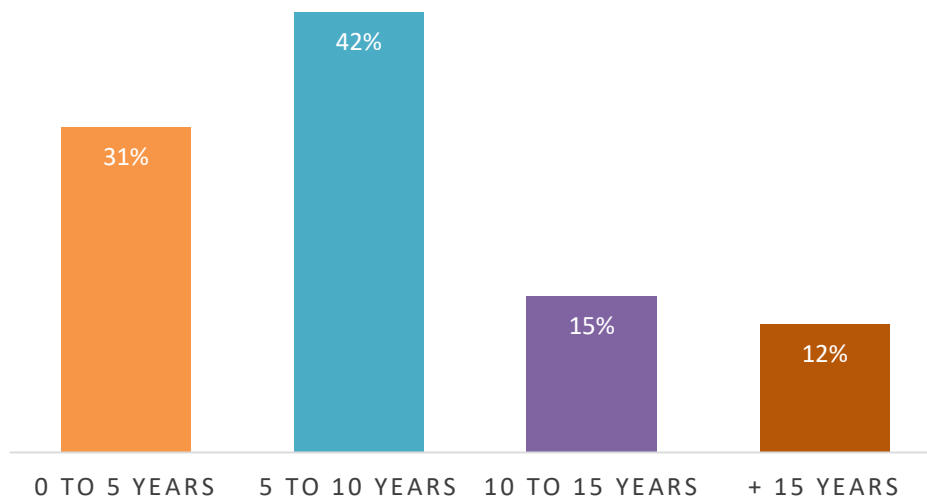
Some countries and/or types of accountancy services are not well represented in the pool of respondents. The survey results should be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalized to specific countries or accountancy services.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF AN INSTITUTE?



Most respondents are either a full member of an institute (57%) or partly as a trainee (13%)⁵. An institute is a professional organisation representing accountants and, in some cases providing qualification and certification.

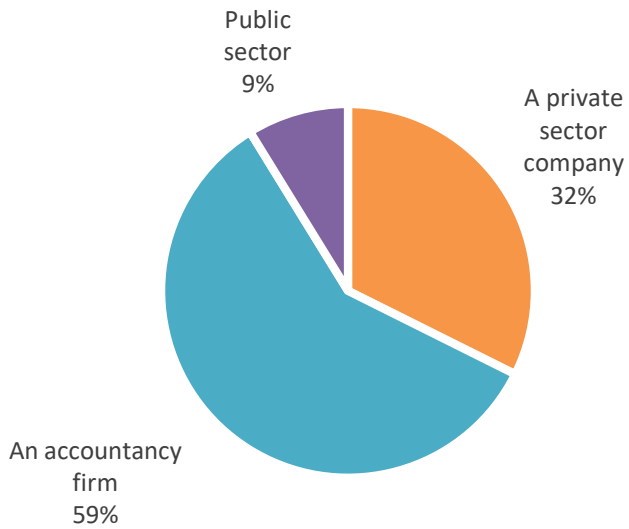
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSION?



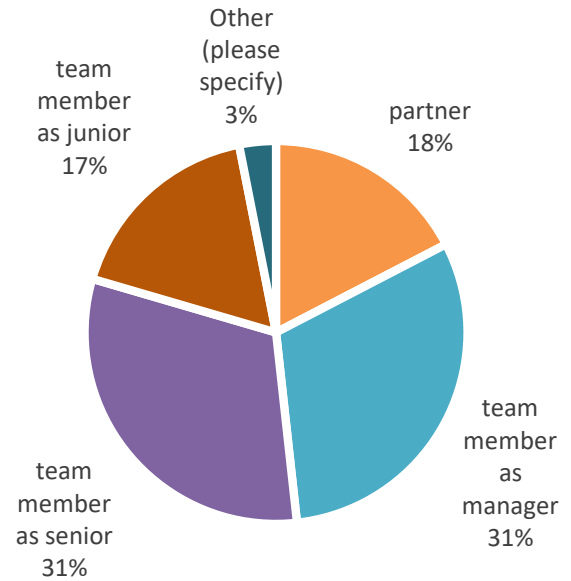
The largest category of respondents in terms of work experience is those with five to ten years of experience (42%). Furthermore, 31% of the respondents have up to five years of experience.

⁵ This excludes respondents that were full time students or not working.

WHERE ARE YOU WORKING?



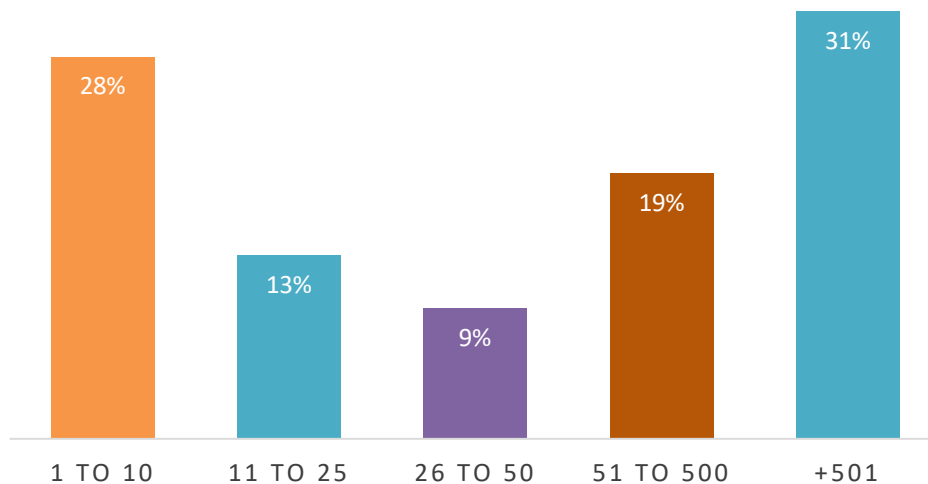
IF WORKING IN AN ACCOUNTANCY FIRM, ARE YOU ...



Most respondents are working for an accountancy firm or for a private sector company. Less than 10% are active in the public sector.

17% of the respondents working in an accountancy firm are junior team members. The proportion of respondents that are senior team members or managers both amount to 31% each. Finally, 18% have reached the position of partner.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN TOTAL IN THE COMPANY/ORGANISATION YOU ARE WORKING FOR?



Respondents work both for small and medium sized enterprises, as well as for large undertakings.

Annex II: Survey questions



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

The survey's objective is to observe what European young accountancy professionals think about ethical behaviour and their related competences. A few questions also relate to career choice.

Who should respond?

European young accountancy professionals, ie:

EUROPEAN: having accomplished education in Europe

YOUNG: below the age of 35 or having joined the accountancy/audit profession in the last 5 years

ACCOUNTANCY PROFESSIONALS: in the process of being trained or having been trained as an accountant / auditor / tax advisor / ...

How to respond?

It takes 15 minutes to complete. It is to be filled out in English.

This survey is completely anonymous. If you would be interested to get in touch further, there is an option to leave your contact information at the end.

Ethics is an essential component of being a professional accountant. FEE is committed to continuously promoting ethical behaviour that helps contribute to an efficient, transparent, and sustainable economy.

Thank you very much in advance for your time and input, your feedback is important to us!



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

2. Questions about your career choice

* 1. In your country, are there career opportunities available for accountancy professionals?

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, sufficiently
- Yes, partly
- Not really
- Not at all

* 2. What were the 3 main reasons why you envisioned this profession for your career?

	The 1st main reason	The 2nd main reason	The 3rd main reason
Good first work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be part of a values-driven profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open many doors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structured career path	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interested in the subject matter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong sense of public interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be part of a regulated profession	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good career progression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 3. Are you happy with your career choice so far?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, partly
- Not really
- Not at all

Why or why not? Which other career paths would you consider instead? (optional)



3. Questions about the values of the accountancy profession

* 4. According to you, what are the most important values of the accountancy profession?

	The 1st most important	The 2nd most important	The 3rd most important
Integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team effort towards a common goal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional competence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High commitment to get things right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Placing the interests of the company/organisation/accountancy firm above personal ones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Objectivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethical behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Placing the interests of clients above personal ones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confidentiality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commitment towards public interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 5. To what extent do you consider accountancy to be a values-driven profession?

- Very much
- To some extent
- Not really
- Not at all

* 6. Do you think that you contribute to serving the public interest?

- Yes, definitely
- Most of the time
- Not really
- Not at all

Why or why not? Explain your reasoning (optional)



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

4. Questions about ethical behaviour

7. What is ethical behaviour for you?

* 8. Do you understand "ethical behaviour" in the same way as your company/organisation/accountancy firm?

- Yes, always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes not
- Not at all

Explain your reasoning (optional)

* 9. Is there a need to behave more ethically in your day to day job?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, in some situations
- Not really
- Not at all

Explain your reasoning (optional)

* 10. Is it important for the accountancy profession to have a code of ethics?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

* 11. Do you know that the accountancy profession is governed by the International Code of Ethics from the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants® (IESBA)?

- Yes
- No



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

5. Questions about your experience of unethical behaviour

* 12. Do you observe unethical behaviour in your job?

- Yes, every day
- Yes, frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

* 13. What kind of unethical behaviour do you observe? (multiple answers possible)

- I don't encounter unethical behaviour issues
- Undue pressure
- Conflict of interest
- Harassment
- Professional misconduct
- Bribe
- Rules, regulations or procedures not followed properly on purpose
- Manipulation of information
- Undue influence
- Other (please specify)

* 14. With whom (multiple answers possible)?

- I don't encounter unethical behaviour issues
- With superiors
- With peers and colleagues
- With clients
- With other practitioners outside of the company/organisation
- With the administration or regulators
- Other (please specify)



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

6. Questions about learning how to apply ethical behaviour

* 15. What is the best way to learn how to behave ethically?

- With structured training
- 'On the ground', it goes with experience
- Personal education
- A mix of everything
- Cannot be learnt
- Other (please specify)

* 16. With regards to ethics, how relevant has been the training you have received so far?

	Very relevant	Relevant	Not relevant	Not applicable
Training in higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training on the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 17. Are you sufficiently supported in your job to deal with unethical behaviour?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Explain your reasoning (optional)

* 18. To help you apply ethical behaviour, do you see a need for... (multiple answers possible)

- Practical guidance that you could refer to
- Training
- Help desk where you could get advice on a specific situation
- Mentoring from someone in your working environment
- No need to provide anything more

Other (please specify)



7. Personal details

* 19. Where are you from?

* 20. What is your age?

* 21. Do you have any background experience or education in something else than accountancy?

Yes

No

Please specify (optional)

* 22. Are you a full time student?

Yes

No



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

8. Your profile

* 23. Are you working?

Yes

No

* 24. Are you a trainee to become an accountancy professional?

Yes

No

* 25. Are you a member of an institute?

- Yes
- Yes, partly (as a trainee)
- No



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

9. Your profile

* 26. Are you working for

- A private sector company
- An accountancy firm
- Public sector

* 27. How many people are employed in total in the company/organisation you are working for?

- 1 to 10
- 11 to 25
- 26 to 50
- 51 to 500
- +501

* 28. How long have you been in the accountancy profession?

- 0 to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 10 to 15 years
- + 15 years



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

10. Your profile

* 29. If working in an accountancy firm, are you providing... (multiple answers possible)

- external audit services
- tax advisory services
- bookkeeping services
- internal audit services
- accounting, corporate finance, legal services
- Other (please specify)

* 30. If working in an accountancy firm, are you

- partner
- team member as manager
- team member as senior
- team member as junior
- Other (please specify)



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

11. Your profile

* 31. If working in a company or in public sector, are you working in the

- internal audit department
- accounting department
- finance department
- legal department
- Other (please specify)

* 32. If working in a company or in public sector, are you

- head of a service
- senior team member
- junior team member
- Other (please specify)



Ethics for Young Accountancy Professionals

12. Contact information

Are you interested in being part of this project or in receiving further information about related work? Please leave your name and contact details below.

The results of this survey will be used by FEE, but will not be disclosed on a name basis.

33. Contact details

Your name

Your email address

Your phone number



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 Federation of European Accountants

WHO WE ARE

The Federation of European Accountants represents 50 professional institutes of accountants and auditors from 37 European countries, with a combined membership of almost 1 million professional accountants working in different capacities. As the voice of the European profession, the Federation recognises the public interest.

The Federation is in the EU Transparency Register (No 4713568401-18).