

Rules and Policies for the program leading to the Master of Arts in Bioethics “Program Handbook” as of August 2026

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a compendium of program requirements for the Master of Arts in Bioethics Program of the University of Pittsburgh. Any discrepancy between the guidelines contained herein and those of the University shall be resolved in favor of the University’s guidelines.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications need to notify both the instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services no later than the 2nd week of the term. Students may be asked to provide documentation of their disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 412-648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 140 William Pitt Union. Upon matriculation students should also inform the Program Director of their particular needs.

GUIDELINES OF THE PROGRAM

I. THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

A total of 30 credits and successful presentation and defense of a Master’s Thesis are required for the MA in Bioethics. The program can be completed within one calendar year, though it is anticipated that many students will extend study over an 18-24 month period. Each student will meet with the Program Director, and together they will arrange the student’s program of study. Incoming students register at the beginning of their first term. Continuing students must adhere to registration deadlines promulgated by the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences each year. Students must also adhere to guidelines and deadlines for adding, dropping, or withdrawing from classes and must have the permission of the Program Director to do so. Course descriptions and schedules are available on-line. The Program Administrator will provide permission numbers to enable students to register after they have consulted with the Program Director. Each semester the Program Administrator will need to “lift the advising hold” that is placed on students’ ability to register; this hold is placed each term to ensure that students consult with the Program Director prior to registering.

Up to six credits of graduate work completed at another institution may be transferred. No more than 12 credits completed at the University of Pittsburgh prior to being admitted to the Program may be applied toward the 30 credits required for the Program.

Students whose grade point average falls below 3.0 will not be allowed to continue until the Program faculty have reviewed their work and decided whether or not they may continue in the

program. The program of study includes:

A. CORE COURSES

Students take three core courses (9 credits) focused on the philosophical foundation of the interdisciplinary field of bioethics: *Philosophy of Medicine*, *Theoretical Foundations of Applied Ethics*, and either *Bioethics* or *Bioethics and Law*.

BIOETH 2658: *Philosophy of Medicine* (3 cr.) An examination of key philosophical concepts and issues, such as concepts of health and disease, subjective experience of pain and illness, production of knowledge, causality, and paradigms of medical reasoning.

BIOETH 2661: *Theoretical Foundations of Applied Ethics* (3 cr.) An examination of classical ethical theories focusing on the relationship between ethical theory and ethical decision-making.

BIOETH 2664: *Bioethics* (3 cr.) A graduate-level introduction to classic topics, texts, and approaches in contemporary bioethics, and critical examination of the practice of bioethics itself.

LAW 5464: *Bioethics and Law* (3 cr.) This seminar provides a graduate-level introduction to bioethical issues from the perspective of the intersection of law, government regulation, healthcare practice, and ethical analysis.

B. RESTRICTED ELECTIVE

The restricted elective requirement is designed to provide a particular disciplinary perspective (e.g., history or law) on issues in medicine and health care, or to focus on a particular aspect of health care (e.g., research or public health). Students must choose one course (3 cr.) from among those designated as restricted electives. Examples include: *Bioethics and Law*; *Ethical and Philosophical Issues in Genetics*; *Gender, Ethics, and the Body*; *Mental Health Law*; *Public Health Law*; and *Medical Sociology*. Students may also identify and propose to the Program Director particular courses to be approved to serve as a restricted elective.

C. ELECTIVES

A minimum of six additional credits of elective course work is required. Courses are chosen from the University's graduate offerings. (A list of recently offered electives is appended in §VI.) The choice of these courses should be made with a view to developing additional expertise related to the student's Master's Thesis and career objectives. Students should also be aware that neighboring institutions, including Carnegie Mellon University and Duquesne University, may offer relevant courses that students may petition to count as electives; reciprocal arrangements with these institutions enable full-time students to take such courses without paying additional tuition. More information is available at [Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education \(PCHE\)](#).

D. CLINICAL PRACTICA

Designed to acquaint students with the clinical environment and provide an opportunity to observe how ethical issues arise and are addressed in that environment, the Clinical Practica serve as capstone learning experience of the Program. Depending on the student's previous experience, students may be exempted from one clinical practicum; however, all students will participate in

the seminars that accompany *Clinical Practicum I*. Students who successfully petition to be exempted from one practicum must substitute an additional 3 cr. elective course.

BIOETH 2604: *Clinical Practicum I* (3 cr.) During the first practicum, students observe many aspects of day-to-day clinical care in at least two healthcare settings (e.g., wards or intensive care units). A seminar accompanies the first practicum and is required of all Program students. It is designed to enable students to discuss cases and issues they observe, discuss literature on clinical ethics issues, and develop skills in presenting and analyzing clinical cases and presenting ethical arguments. The specific requirements of these seminars and of the clinical experience are set by practicum instructors. Additional activities may include observation of clinical ethics teaching, ethics consultation, and ethics committee meetings, as well as meetings with a clinical mentor. The first practicum typically runs for eight weeks at the beginning of the summer term (usually mid-May through June), though work in preparation for the clinical observation experience may begin in advance, thus students may register in any term.

BIOETH 2606: *Clinical Practicum II* (3 cr.) The second practicum is an intensive, typically four-week long practicum in a clinical setting (e.g., critical care medicine, psychiatry, surgery, or transplantation), which is chosen in relation to the student's research interests. The second practicum is designed to provide a more intensive experience in one area of clinical medicine. Experiences in health policy, public health, or research settings may also be arranged. Students must write a brief proposal for their second practicum that states (i.) the proposed setting for their observational experience and on-site mentor, (ii.) their goals for the experience, (iii.) the specific experiences and activities that will be pursued, and (iv.) the product they will produce (e.g., a paper, case analysis, or journal). The proposal must be submitted to the Program Director for approval. Students typically meet regularly with a mentor or the Program Director during the practicum. Following completion of *Clinical Practicum I*, this second practicum may be taken in any term by arrangement. In some cases the second practicum may be extended across a longer period than one month or one semester.

E. MASTER'S THESIS

Students must propose, research, write, and defend a Master's Thesis. Students typically count up to six research credits in BIOETH 2904, 2905, 2906, and 2907 toward their degree. (Students may instead take up to six additional credits of approved electives, but must still complete the Master's Thesis requirements.) These research credits permit students to maintain their student status while allowing them time off from regular classes to engage in research.

Students conduct research toward their Master's Thesis under the close supervision of their advisor, who is responsible for determining whether they have made satisfactory progress and for awarding credits. Students who register for research credits (BIOETH 2904, 2905, 2906, and 2907) receive Incomplete (I) grades until they successfully present their thesis proposal and subsequently successfully complete and defend the thesis itself. See §III for advice about formulating, researching, and writing the Master's Thesis.

F. ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

As part of their preparation for writing a Master's Thesis, students must accrue 30 "bioethics program activity units" by attending and participating in lectures, colloquia, reading groups, and

conferences. These activities are sponsored by a variety of University units, including the Bioethics Program; Center for Health Equity; Center for Philosophy of Science; Center for Research Ethics; Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program; Humanities Center; Institute for Bioethics; School of Law; and the Research, Ethics and Society Initiative of Pitt Research. A curated list of these activities, including national and regional conferences, are posted on the events calendar of the [Center for Research Ethics](#) and many are listed on the [University calendar of events](#); however, students may petition to have other activities count toward this requirement. Each event is typically considered one "activity unit," with the exception of conferences which are typically awarded 2 credits per full day.

The rationale for this requirement is three-fold. First, students should be exposed to a variety of topics and styles of argument in the interdisciplinary field of bioethics prior to and while writing their Master's Thesis. Second, attending these activities enables students to meet faculty members who may serve on their Master's Thesis committee. Third, students are provided an opportunity to develop a national network of colleagues in bioethics by participating in the activities of visiting faculty members.

To ensure that accrual of these bioethics program activity units is properly recorded, students must send an email to the Program Administrator at the end of each term (by the end of classes) stating which activities have been attended during that term. The Program Administrator will keep a record of the units accrued by each student.

Accrual of these 30 units is required to receive a grade of Satisfactory (S) for research credits in BIOETH 2904, 2905, 2906, and 2907, and to graduate from the Program.

II. JOINT PROGRAMS

MA/JD Program. Students enrolled in the joint MA/JD program receive integrated training in law and bioethics. Within the MA program, joint program students take 30 credits: the three core courses (9 credits); three electives (9 credits), including at least two of *Bioethics and Law*, *Health Law and Policy*, *Health Law and Bioethics Seminar*, and *Public Health Law*; *Bioethics and Health Law Clinical Practicum* (the equivalent of *Clinical Practicum I*) and *Clinical Practicum II* (6 credits), and 6 additional credits, which may be research credits in BIOETH 2904, 2905, 2906, and 2907. Like all bioethics students, joint program students must write a Master's Thesis. Students typically spend four years in the joint program, including one summer in the clinical practica. Students are required to consult with the Director of the MA/JD Program during or prior to the spring registration period each year in order to assure that they meet all requirements of the Joint Degree program. Students must earn 30 credits for the MA in Bioethics. A maximum of 6 credits of course work may be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements of both degrees.

Most students begin combining courses in law and bioethics during their second year of legal study, though rarely a student may take a course in Bioethics during the first year. Students should consult the Director of the MA/JD Program as soon as possible to plan their course of study.

The writing requirements for both degrees are typically simultaneously satisfied by writing the Master's Thesis on a subject in the field of bioethics and law. Many of the courses that students

take in the joint law and bioethics program also satisfy the requirements for the Health Law Certificate Program in the School of Law. Thus, by taking only a few additional courses required for the Health Law Certificate Program, students may fulfill the requirements of this program as well.

Joint program students must pay tuition at the law school rate at least 5 semesters and must be registered as Dietrich School students for 2 semesters. Students who complete the program in 7 or more semesters will be billed at the (typically lower) Dietrich School tuition rate for two semesters. When coded as “primary A&S/Dietrich School” and paying tuition at the Dietrich School rate, a maximum of 15 credits are paid for at the Dietrich School per-semester tuition rate. If a student takes more than 15 credits, the student will be billed extra for any credits over 15 at the Dietrich School per-credit tuition rate.

Students in the joint program must be awarded the two degrees at the same time (i.e., in the same term); therefore, students must adhere to graduation deadlines for both the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Law. Students should be aware that if they withdraw from the joint program (e.g., if they decide to pursue only the JD or only the MA), they must then fulfill the requirements of the individual program in which they remain, and that some of the courses that they have taken in the degree program that they drop may not count toward the degree program in which they remain.

MA/MD Program. Students enrolled in the joint MA/MD program receive integrated training in medicine and bioethics. Students must earn 30 credits for the MA in Bioethics. Because of their clinical experience, students in the joint program are exempted from the second clinical practicum. They will conduct their observation for *Clinical Practicum I* in clinical settings related to their research interests. Participation in the seminars accompanying *Clinical Practicum I* is required.

Students are advised to integrate work on their School of Medicine Longitudinal Research Project and their Bioethics Program Master’s Thesis.

Students in the joint program must be awarded the two degrees at the same time (i.e., in the same term); therefore, students must adhere to graduation deadlines for both the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Medicine. Students should be aware that if they withdraw from the joint program (e.g., if they decide to pursue only the MD or only the MA), they must fulfill the requirements of the individual program in which they remain, and that they may need to complete additional work in order to satisfy the requirements of that program.

III. THE MASTER’S THESIS

All students in the Master’s Program in Bioethics must write and successfully defend a Master’s Thesis. Like all requirements of the Program, the requirements for this project must conform to the requirements of the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences. All Master’s Theses must be submitted electronically, and students are responsible for adhering to guidelines, available at <https://etd.pitt.edu/>. Students should take one of the School’s ETD workshops. Each term the School issues a deadline for submission of the final, approved ETD version of the thesis.

The Master's Thesis affords an opportunity for students to explore a topic in some depth and to demonstrate their abilities to engage in independent research and to mount a sustained argument in support of a claim (thesis statement or proposal). At minimum, the Master's Thesis should demonstrate a student's sound understanding of relevant literature on the topic chosen. The Master's Thesis should identify a significant question or problem and provide a productive response to the question. Although in rare instances, a student's paper will be able to provide a solution to the problem identified, or a "knockdown" argument in response to others in the literature, in most cases the Master's Thesis should seek to increase the reader's understanding of the question identified.*

A. CHOOSING A TOPIC

The topic should be identified and developed by the student as early as possible during the student's tenure in the Program. Potential topics should be discussed with the Program Director and faculty teaching core courses. The Program Director must approve the topic, selection of advisor, and committee composition prior to the Paper proposal meeting (see below).

The topic should be one of enduring interest to the student and should be in an area in which the student already has adequate substantive and methodological background, including good familiarity with the relevant literature and a sense of how the paper's argument would proceed. Once the student has a topic, he/she should consult the Program Director to discuss appropriate faculty members who may be asked to serve as the Master's Thesis advisor. The student might proceed by writing a paragraph stating the topic, idea, or question and ask the prospective advisor to read it in preparation for a meeting in which the student and prospective advisor will together consider the suitability of the topic and the suitability of the faculty member as an advisor.

B. CHOOSING AN ADVISOR AND COMMITTEE

For advice on the selection of a Thesis advisor, students should consult the Program Director. In consultation with the advisor, the student should then select a second reader and any other committee members who are qualified to judge the quality of the student's work and who may offer helpful guidance and constructive criticism as the work progresses. The Program Director must approve the final composition of the committee.

C. THE PROPOSAL

Under the guidance of the Thesis advisor and after some initial research, the student must write a proposal for the Master's Thesis. The proposal should clearly state the paper's topic, provide some background on the topic so that the significance of the topic is clear, and indicate the specific aims and an outline of the argument, and clearly state the argument's anticipated conclusion. The student should also provide a bibliography of the relevant literature which was consulted in writing the proposal and which will be used in writing the paper. The advisor may require that the bibliography be annotated or require a literature review in essay form which is incorporated into the proposal.

D. THE PROPOSAL MEETING

The proposal meeting must be scheduled through the Program Director. Students are expected to have a grade point average of a B+ or better (in Program- relevant courses) prior to holding a

*John Lyne, PhD, is to be credited for succinctly articulating these desiderata for Master's Thesis projects

proposal meeting. The proposal (and bibliography) should be given to all committee members two weeks prior to the proposal meeting. A copy of the proposal, which should include the names of the project's advisor and committee members, as well as the date of the prospectus meeting, must be supplied to the Program Director two weeks in advance of the proposal meeting.

At the meeting, the student is likely to be asked to give a brief (approximately five minutes) oral presentation of the topic, proposed research methods, and outline of the proposed argument (i.e., a brief summary of the proposal). Then the advisor and committee members may ask the student questions about the topic and the relevant literature.

The committee will then confer in the student's absence and will report to the student whether the topic is appropriate (e.g., sufficiently original and manageable within a reasonable period of time), whether there is additional literature to be taken into account, whether the research methodology is deemed adequate, and finally, whether the plan of research, the proposal itself, is approved. Following approval of the proposal, the student and advisor will outline a plan for research and writing. The advisor and committee members should agree, with the student, who will supervise the writing process (e.g., whether only the advisor, or some or all committee members, will comment upon interim drafts). It is the responsibility of the student to supply a copy of the planned timetable to committee members and to the Program Director. It is the responsibility of the student to supply drafts of the paper to the advisor at the negotiated intervals.

Alternatively, the committee may request revisions of the proposal and may request a second (and perhaps subsequent) proposal meeting(s). The committee may also request that the student take additional course work or that the student ask additional faculty members to serve on the committee. The appropriate form should be signed by the committee with its recommendation and returned to the Program Administrator. In rare cases, the committee may decide that the student is not qualified to write the Master's Thesis to complete the Program.

E. RESEARCH AND WRITING

After the student's proposal is approved, research continues and writing begins. In consultation with the advisor, the student should determine when other committee members should be consulted and advised of progress. Frequent consultation with the advisor and committee members may help to avoid miscommunication, misunderstanding, and research errors that cannot be easily be corrected when the research has already progressed to a late stage. Advisor and student should meet regularly or communicate by email regularly, for example, on a bi-weekly basis. Students should consult the Program Director if there appears to be a breakdown in communication between student and advisor.

F. PRESENTATION OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

When the advisor and student deem the Master's Thesis to be in its final draft form, a draft must be supplied to all committee members. A meeting to present the paper formally (a "defense") may be scheduled no earlier than two weeks after the final draft is submitted to all committee members. The date of the meeting should be set so that all committee members can participate, and those members should endeavor to accommodate graduation deadlines and each other's schedules so that setting the date of the presentation meeting is not an onerous task for the student. Although

setting this date is the student's responsibility, the advisor should facilitate this process as necessary.

All rules and deadlines for defenses and graduation must comply with guidelines established by the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences. Doing so is the responsibility of the student.

It is advisable for the student to ask whether committee members would like to meet individually with the student prior to the meeting. Committee members are not obligated to meet individually with the student, but it is a courtesy to them to give them an opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions, or suggest possible topics of discussion prior to the meeting.

In the beginning of the meeting, the student should be prepared to provide a brief (five – ten minute) overview of the argument of the Master's Thesis. The advisor serves as the chair of the meeting. After the meeting, the committee members will meet without the student present to determine whether the Master's Thesis was acceptable and successfully defended, and the advisor will inform the student of the outcome.

The committee has four options: (1) it may request no revisions and accept the paper as it stands; (2) it may require minor revisions which it is the responsibility of the advisor to oversee; (3) it may require major revisions and require a second meeting; or (4) it may fail the student and not afford an opportunity for revision of the paper. The appropriate forms, reflecting the committee's decision, must be signed and filed with the Program Administrator and the Dean's office. It is the student's responsibility to be certain that appropriate forms are completed and filed.

The Master's Thesis must conform to the formatting requirements of the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences and be submitted electronically by the School's deadline; students are responsible for adhering to appropriate templates, guidelines, and the deadline that is announced each term (see <https://etd.pitt.edu/>).

G. SPECIAL NOTES ON EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Anyone wishing to pursue empirical research in bioethics as part of the Master's Thesis should, as early as possible, consult with the Program Director, who will ensure the student possesses an adequate methodological background or will plan a curriculum of research methodology courses. Prior to the stage of selecting a specific topic and advisor, students should have determined whether they wish to pursue empirical research, and ensure that they have adequate time remaining in the program to complete the project and have relevant methodological expertise. The Master's Thesis must include the specific aims of the research, the research methods, and the anticipated results and framework for interpretation.

Receipt of appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption is the responsibility of the student; IRB approval or exemption should be sought prior to the proposal meeting so that the committee may assist the student in addressing any concerns of the IRB.

Pursuing empirical research will almost certainly require that the student spend more than one calendar year in the program. Students interested in pursuing such research, therefore, should consult with the Program Director as soon as possible following matriculation.

H. JOINT MA/JD PROGRAM STUDENTS

Students in the joint MA/JD program should consult the Law School's Director of the joint degree program to determine whether their proposed Master's Thesis will fulfill the writing requirements of the law school.

I. JOINT MA/MD PROGRAM STUDENTS

Students in the joint MA/MD program should consult with the Program Director about synergy between the two curricula, including whether the research planned for the Master's Thesis and completion of the MA will fulfill the requirements of the School of Medicine Longitudinal Research Project.

IV. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students must be active during the 12-month period preceding graduation (that is, they must register or have been registered for at least 1 credit during that period). Students must be registered during terms in which they complete/pass official milestones, such as the thesis defense. A student who plans to graduate must complete an application for graduation with the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences Office of Graduate Studies and adhere to deadlines for doing so; application deadlines are relatively early each term. Graduation deadlines for the Dietrich School—including the deadline to submit the Master's Thesis—occur in April, August, and December of each year. Students should clearly indicate Bioethics as the area of concentration on their application for graduation in the space marked "Academic Program."

All I and G grades, including those for courses not relevant to the degree program, must be changed before the degree can be posted, or the Program must state in writing that the incomplete courses are not required for the degree.

Students in a joint program (MA/JD or MA/MD) must meet graduation deadlines both for their respective schools and for the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences. Joint program students must complete the requirements for the joint program; students who withdraw from the joint program and elect to graduate with only one of the degrees (e.g., MA, JD, or MD) risk not having fulfilled requirements which apply when those degrees are pursued separately.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

A. EVALUATIONS, GRADE REQUIREMENTS, AND INCOMPLETE GRADES

Faculty teaching core courses will meet early each spring to evaluate formally all students currently enrolled in the program. The student will be informed in writing as to whether the student is making good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory progress. Students falling in the latter category will be given one warning, and if improvement to satisfactory is not made by the end of the term, they will be subject to termination from the program. Minimally, students must complete successfully the requirements as stated herein, within the stipulated time periods. In order to be in good standing a student must maintain a B+ average and must complete each core course with a B+ or better. Students also will have the opportunity to meet with the Program Director to discuss the results of the evaluation.

Incomplete grades (I or G) must be cleared within the deadline established by the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences or the course instructor, whichever is more stringent.

Failure to complete the Program requirements will be considered grounds for termination from the program.

In addition to this formal evaluation meeting, in November, the Program Director will contact the instructors of the core courses to determine whether any of the students are experiencing academic difficulties and will assist the instructor(s) in intervening to advise the student of the perceived difficulty and to offer the student guidance.

B. INACTIVE STATUS

A graduate student who is not registered for at least one credit during a 12-month period is transferred to inactive status and must file an application for readmission to graduate study (application fee may be required) before being permitted to register again. Readmission is not automatic, the application fee must be paid, and the original statute of limitations remains in effect. Students on inactive status may not apply to graduate.

C. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Students may request a leave of absence and are advised to do so to avoid becoming inactive. Students should consult the Program Administrator or the Dietrich School's Office of Graduate Studies to obtain the correct form to submit their written request to the Program Director detailing the reason for and length of their proposed leave. The Program Director will consider such requests in consultation with core faculty as necessary.

A student may apply for an official leave of absence from graduate study in cases of illness or personal concerns. The application may be made for a maximum of one year for Master's students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance, and the leave must be recommended to the Dean by the Program Director and approved by the Dean. Only one leave of absence may be obtained by a student during her or his graduate career. If the leave of absence has been approved, the statute of limitations for the degree is extended by the length of time of the leave. A student on an approved leave of absence must apply for readmission, but readmission is automatic and the fee will be waived. Leaves cannot be granted to inactive students.

D. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Requirements for the Master's degree must be completed within a period of four consecutive calendar years from the student's initial registration for graduate study. Under exceptional circumstances a candidate for an advanced degree may apply for an extension of this requirement, known as the statute of limitations. Such extensions are generally granted only for one year. Thus, part-time students must be especially mindful of the need to progress steadily through the program.

Applications, available from the Office of Graduate Studies, must state the reason for the delay, provide evidence of continuing progress toward the completion of the degree, and include a detailed plan (including interim deadlines for completion of components of the program/thesis) and proposed date for completion. The request must be approved by the Program Director; it must

then be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for final action. Each student who requests an extension of the statute of limitations must be able to demonstrate proper preparation for the completion of all current degree requirements. An extension of the statute of limitations cannot be granted to inactive students; such students must apply to be readmitted before applying for an extension of the statute of limitations.

E. ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Students are encouraged to attend local and national bioethics meetings. These include the annual meetings of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (<http://asbh.org/annual-meeting/bioethics-humanities-meeting>) and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (<https://appe-ethics.org/>) and local forums such as the University's annual Healthcare Ethics Conference. Students should be aware that national and regional meetings often offer special student registration rates or scholarships to support attendance; students are urged to take advantage of these opportunities. Student paper prizes are also offered by the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities and the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics. The Dietrich School and the Graduate and Professional Student Organization provide travel grants to students presenting work at conferences (<https://www.asgraduate.pitt.edu/financial-support/conference-travel-grants>).

F. GUIDELINES, REQUIREMENTS, AND DEADLINES

Students are responsible for obtaining and adhering to relevant guidelines, requirements, and deadlines described in University documents and on University websites, including the *Academic Integrity Code*. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the *Academic Integrity Guide* for an overview of the topic and especially *Understand and Avoid Plagiarism by English Professor Mark Kemp*.

G. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / GENERATIVE AI

Most importantly, people learn by doing. In the case of learning about bioethics and learning how to “do” bioethics, students learn by reading, listening, thinking, finding flaws in others’ arguments, organizing ideas, making arguments, outlining papers, re-organizing papers, revising drafts, as well as by observing, collecting data, analyzing them, interpreting them, comparing those interpretations to previously published findings, and talking with others. Students learn by doing all these activities themselves.

At some point, a person likely does not learn anything more about the processes of multiplication or division by doing yet another calculation “by hand.” At that point, it makes sense to use a calculator. It is unclear at this time in the introduction and evolution of AI, at what point a person working in bioethics and its related disciplines might not benefit from reading another article in full (rather than reading an AI summary), or might not benefit from outlining an argument the first, second, or “umpteenth” time (rather than prompting a generative AI tool to do it); however, it is unlikely that students will fail to benefit from doing these activities themselves.

It is likely that studying bioethics –and maybe even doing bioethics across a long career—will always be more like reading a poem than like doing long division. People have found value in reading poems, novels, and stories, even after they’ve already mastered the skill of reading, and even when they’ve read a particular work before and know “what it means” or know how the story concludes. The meaning and the value changes over time as the reader brings additional experience

and ideas to the text. Reading bioethical arguments and reports of empirical findings may be a lot like reading poems and stories in that regard.

It will take time to discover when and how generative AI can be helpful in bioethics in the ways that calculators (and specialized computer programs) are useful in arithmetic and de rigueur in so many fields (like accounting, architecture, and engineering). Ultimately, it is the opportunity and responsibility of individual people, including students, to avoid becoming victims of the “deskilling” that is a risk of reliance on technologies like calculators, spellcheck, and generative AI.

Authors, including students, are responsible for the content that they produce by whatever means, including the use of AI/GenAI. When submitting work for classes or in fulfillment of degree requirements, students should ascertain and adhere to applicable guidelines, including limitations, regarding the use of AI/GenAI. This would mean consulting relevant course instructors, advisors, and University policies and guidance regarding the use of AI/GenAI. When creating or submitting work for publication or other forms of evaluation (e.g., for grant funding or awards), students must ascertain and adhere to applicable policies and guidelines. Editors, publishers, and funding agencies are among the entities that have established policies and guidelines. It is important to remember that both these technologies and the policies and guidance regarding them are constantly evolving.

Among relevant policies and guidelines are:

- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, [*Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals*](#)
- Congressional Research Service, [*Generative Artificial Intelligence and Copyright Law*](#)
- [*Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Generative AI in Research and Education Generative AI Resources for Faculty*](#), University of Pittsburgh

VI. ADVISING AND SELECTION OF ELECTIVES

Students should consult the Program Director regularly and at least once per term. Students need approval Program Director approval of the courses for which they plan to register. They should consult the current course offerings for each term to identify relevant elective courses and consult the program director to make their selections.

The Program Administrator will provide permission numbers to enable students to register after they have consulted with the Program Director. Each semester the Program Administrator will need to “lift the advising hold” that is placed on students’ ability to register; this hold is placed each term to ensure that students consult with the Program Director prior to registering.

Students may petition to have particular courses count as an elective. The process is informal; send an email to the program director. Students should keep in mind that many departments and programs, including the Bioethics Program, offer Directed Readings and Special Topics courses. This list indicates the range of potential electives and reflects recent offerings.

Course name	Department/School and course number
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<i>Bioethics and Law</i>	Law 5464
<i>Dimensions of Aging: Culture and Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2532
<i>Ethical Issues in Genetic Counseling</i>	Human Genetic 2052
<i>Ethical Issues in Public Health Genetics and Research</i>	Human Genetic 2062
<i>Ethnographic and Qualitative Methods</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 3007
<i>Feminist Social Work</i>	Social Work 2058
<i>Health Law and Policy</i>	Law 5395
<i>Kantian Ethics</i>	Philosophy 2171
<i>Law of Mental Health</i>	Law 5747
<i>Moral Theory</i>	Philosophy 2310
<i>Narrative, Literature and the Experience of Illness</i>	Medicine Elective 5910
<i>Philosophy of Psychiatry</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2740
<i>Philosophy of Psychiatry and Mad Studies</i>	Bioethics 2698 (Special Topics)
<i>Philosophy of Science</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2101, Philosophy 2600
<i>Public Health Approaches to Women's Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2599
<i>Public Health Law</i>	Law 5089
<i>Research Ethics and Responsible Conduct of Research</i>	BIOETH 2030, PUBHLT 2030 (1 cr.), this may be paired with a Directed Reading
<i>Risk Communication</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2572
<i>Seminar in Family Planning</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2562
<i>Social Movements</i>	Sociology 2341, History 2043
<i>Sustainability in Latin America</i>	Bioethics 2668
<i>Theories of Gender and Sexuality</i>	Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies 2252