

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

RULES AND POLICIES

FOR THE

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM LEADING TO THE

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOETHICS

*A Program of the Center for Bioethics & Health Law
and the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences*

August 2021

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a compendium of program requirements for the Master of Arts in Bioethics Program of the University of Pittsburgh. The Bioethics Program is a joint program of the Center for Bioethics & Health Law and the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences. Any discrepancy between the guidelines contained herein and those of the University shall be resolved in favor of the University's guidelines.

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits, and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

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 your 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 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. 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*; *Historical and Sociological Perspectives on Public Health*; *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 graduate offerings of the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Law, Medicine, Public and International Affairs, and Public Health. (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 Duquesne University, Carnegie Mellon University, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 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 a 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 the first clinical practicum. 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 settings within University of Pittsburgh affiliated healthcare settings (e.g., wards or intensive care units). A seminar typically accompanies 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. 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., surgery, psychiatry, transplantation, critical care medicine), 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, journal). The proposal is submitted for approval to the Program Director. 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.

E. 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 units, including the Center for Bioethics & Health Law Bioethics; Consortium Ethics Program; Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program; and Medical Humanities Mondays. These activities, including national and regional conferences, are typically posted on the events calendar of the Center for Bioethics & Health Law; 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 4 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.

Among the activities that routinely serve to fulfill this requirement are: Center for Bioethics & Health Law Visiting Professor Grand Rounds (in various departments/schools) and lectures, as well as Medical Humanities Mondays lectures, Center Colloquia, and the Center's annual Medical Ethics Conference (typically in the Spring term), as well as other conferences sponsored and co-sponsored by the Center.

Although it is recognized that class meetings and participation at other professional conferences may interfere with Center-sponsored activities, students are expected to avoid such conflicts insofar as possible. Students who have such conflicts must inform the Program Administrator by email at the beginning of the

term. Employed part-time students whose employment conflicts with these activities should consult with the Program Director.

To ensure that accrual of these bioethics program activity units is properly recorded, students should send an email to the Program Administrator stating that they have attended such an activity; this record may be submitted at the end of each term. The Program Administrator will keep a record of the units accrued by each student.

In addition, when asked to RSVP for a Center-sponsored activity, students should do so in advance of attending, again, by email to the Program Administrator. Absences from these events should be explained by email to the Program Administrator.

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.

F. 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.

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.

Students may begin combining courses in law and bioethics as soon as they matriculate in the joint program and should consult the Director of the MA/JD Program about doing so. Students matriculating in the joint program at the start of their studies (i.e., in their first fall term) may postpone Criminal Law until their second year and instead take one of the Bioethics core courses.

The writing requirements for both degrees are 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 (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 probably will 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. In all cases, the first two years of the medical school curriculum will be taken intact; in most cases, the first three years will be taken intact. Then, typically, the student will spend one full calendar year (August-July) earning 30 credits in the bioethics program. (In rare cases, students may pursue the Bioethics Program concurrently with their years in medical school. This may be particularly appropriate for those in the MD/PhD Program. See the Program Director for information.)

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.

Because of the fixed time frame of study in medical school and the demanding nature of the clinical years of study, students in this joint program must begin work on their Master’s Thesis early in their year of bioethics study in order to complete the joint degree on time. Students may elect to spend up to two of their Medical School Electives researching, writing, defending, and/or revising their 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. Students should consult with appropriate authorities in the School of Medicine to determine whether writing the Master’s Thesis fulfills the Scholarly Project requirement of the School of Medicine. Finally, because many of the requirements of the School of Medicine’s Area of Concentration in Humanities, Ethics, and Palliative Care will be fulfilled in the course of pursuing the MA in Bioethics, students may want to consider enrolling in that Area of Concentration.

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.

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.¹

A. CHOOSING A TOPIC

The topic should be identified and developed by the student in consultation with the advisor, and thereafter with the committee (a second reader and any other faculty deemed pertinent by the student and advisor), as early as possible during the student's tenure in the Program. 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 approach a faculty member affiliated with the CBHL to ask that individual 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 an 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. At least one committee member must be a faculty member affiliated with the Center for Bioethics & Health Law. The Program Director must approve the final composition of the committee.

C. THE PROPOSAL

Under the guidance of the 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 may instead 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 Graduate Administrator in the Center for Bioethics & Health Law. A form must be completed and filed with the Program Administrator. Students are expected to have a grade point average of a B+ or better (in Program-relevant courses) prior to holding a 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 and a form stating the names of the project's advisor and committee members and the date on which the prospectus meeting is to be held must be given to the Graduate Administrator two weeks prior to the meeting. The Graduate Administrator will ensure that the Program Director receives notice of the meeting.

¹John Lyne, PhD, is to be credited for articulating most succinctly these desiderata for Master's Thesis projects.

At the proposal 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 and 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. The date, time, and location of the meeting must be scheduled through the Program Administrator. Meetings to present and defend the Master's Thesis are open to the public and are publicized. All rules and deadlines for defenses and graduation must comply with guidelines established by the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences. The student must provide the Graduate Administrator a one-page abstract of the Master's Thesis at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

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 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 is the responsibility of the student; IRB approval 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 registering for Medical School Electives in association with their Master’s Thesis. One or two month-long electives may be so designated. Students should consult with authorities in the School of Medicine to determine whether research for the Master’s Thesis and completion of the MA will fulfill the School’s requirements for the Scholarly 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 fill out 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 & Science. 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. MID-YEAR EVALUATIONS

Members of the core faculty 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.

Incomplete grades (I or G) must be cleared within one year of the end of the course for which the incomplete grade was awarded.

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

Students also will have the opportunity to meet with the Program Director to discuss the results of the evaluation.

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 to 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. Students on inactive status may not apply to graduate.

C. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Students may request a leave of absence. Students should 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. Leaves of Absence are of two kinds *Official* and *Unofficial*:

Official: A graduate 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.

Unofficial: This *de facto* leave occurs when a student becomes inactive and has not applied for an official leave of absence. Readmission is not automatic, the application fee must be paid, and the original statute of limitations remains in effect.

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 plan 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 or students on unofficial leave from the program.

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 Center's annual Medical 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>).

In addition, students are encouraged to attend lectures and colloquia, including History of Medicine Lectures (the C.F. Reynolds Medical History Society), Health Humanities Lectures, Healthcare and Religion Lectures, and Visiting Professor Ethics Grand Rounds lectures. The Cultural Studies Program, Global Studies Program, and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, as well as the University Center for International Studies also frequently have programs of relevance to bioethics. These meetings, conferences, and lectures may be used by students to fulfill the Program's requirement that they accrue 30 "bioethics program activity units." At the end of each term, students should report their accrual of these units to the program administrator, noting the name and date of each event in which they participated.

With appropriate permissions, which may be facilitated by the Program Director, students may also attend Ethics Committee meetings and meetings of the Institutional Review Board.

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:

[Academic Integrity Code](#)

[Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Research](#)

[Research Integrity Policy](#)

VI. RECENTLY OFFERED ELECTIVES

This list is intended only to suggest the range of potential electives. Students should consult the current course offerings for each term to select elective courses.

COURSE NAME	DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL AND COURSE NUMBER
<i>Bioethics and Law</i>	Law 5464
<i>Biomedical Technology Law</i>	Law 5121
<i>Biopolitical Readings of the Body</i>	English Lit 2067
<i>Dimensions of Aging: Culture and Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2532
<i>Ethics (core)</i>	Philosophy 2300
<i>Ethics and Aging</i>	Gerontology 2001
<i>Feminist Theory</i>	Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies 2242
<i>Ethical and Philosophical Issues in Medical Genetics</i>	Bioethics 2698 (Special Topics)
<i>Ethical Issues in Clinical & Public Health Genetics</i>	Human Genetics HUGEN 2052
<i>Ethics and Regulation of Clinical Research</i>	Medicine CLRES2050
<i>Ethnographic and Qualitative Methods</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 3007
<i>Gender, Ethics, and the Body</i>	Bioethics 2698 (Special Topics), Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies 2240
<i>Gender and Health</i>	Anthropology 2726
<i>Genes and Behavior</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2662, Philosophy 2672
<i>Global Bioethics</i>	Health Care Ethics Program HCE 755, Duquesne University
<i>Global Perspectives on Women's Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2995
<i>Health and Healing: Analysis and Theory</i>	Anthropology 2731
<i>Health Care Law and Ethics</i>	Health Care Ethics Program HCE 546, Duquesne University
<i>Health Law and Policy</i>	Law 5395
<i>Jewish Health Care Ethics</i>	Health Care Ethics Program HCE651, Duquesne University
<i>Justice and the Ethics of Health Care Delivery</i>	Health Care Ethics Program HCE652, Duquesne University
<i>Kantian Ethics</i>	Philosophy 2171
<i>Law, Biomedical Science, and Human Dignity</i>	Health Care Ethics Program HCE679, Duquesne University

<i>Moral Psychology</i>	Philosophy 2315
<i>Moral Theory</i>	Philosophy 2310
<i>Narrative Ethics and Medicine</i>	Medicine 5910
<i>New Reproductive Practices and Law</i>	Law 5580
<i>Philosophical Perspectives on Feminism</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2696, Philosophy 2340
<i>Philosophy of Psychiatry</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2650
<i>Philosophy of Science</i>	History and Philosophy of Science 2501, Philosophy 2600
<i>Political and Legal Factors in Public Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2552
<i>Public Health Approaches to Women's Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2599
<i>Public Health Law</i>	Law 5089
<i>Risk Communication</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2572
<i>Seminar in Family Planning</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2562
<i>Social Inequalities in Health</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2598
<i>Social Movements</i>	Sociology 2341, History 2043, Political Science 2380
<i>Theories of Masculinity</i>	Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies 2240
<i>Women in Development</i>	Behavioral and Community Health Sciences 2553