



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Master of Bioethics Degree Program

Offered as a full-time (one-year) or part-time (two-year) course of study



This degree program, offered by the Center for Bioethics at Harvard Medical School, offers education, skills development and hands-on experience that prepare professionals to assess and address morally challenging aspects of healthcare and life sciences.

Candidates for this program include:

- Allied Health Professionals
- Attorneys
- Chaplains
- Ethicists
- Journalists
- Pharmaceutical and Biotech Professionals
- Physicians and Nurses
- Regulators and Policymakers
- Researchers, IRB, and Compliance Officers
- Social Workers and Therapists

A limited number of admissions may be reserved for exceptional post-baccalaureate applicants.



**CENTER FOR
BIOETHICS**
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Application and Information:
bioethics.hms.harvard.edu/Master-Bioethics



HARVARD

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Dear Friends,

One can hardly scan the news headlines on any given day without finding a healthcare story that deeply challenges our sense of morality.

From the research laboratory to the trenches of the ICU, from the State House to the courthouse, the pace of change in the life sciences is driving up the complexity of bioethical decisions and the need for professionals with the knowledge and skills to assess the ethical, legal and social implications of the choices at hand and to champion the right courses of action.

Harvard Medical School has created a new Master's program in bioethics to educate clinicians, researchers, administrators, attorneys and other professionals to effectively address these challenges.

Led by faculty who are thought leaders across a wide array of disciplines, the curriculum combines formal grounding in the foundations of bioethics with mentorship, skills development and practical experience applying ethical reasoning in real-world settings.

The program also offers immersion in the debates at the cutting edge of bioethics with the healthcare, research, policy and industry leaders who are framing these discussions and the opportunity to get to know them personally -- something that is essential to building a career in bioethics.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Weintraub Brendel, MD, JD

Director, Master's Program
Center for Bioethics, Harvard Medical School



**The Center for
Bioethics Master's
Program is
spearheaded by
Rebecca Weintraub
Brendel, MD, JD**



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The Master of Bioethics degree program is offered through the Center for Bioethics at Harvard Medical School.

Participants learn both the principles and practice of bioethics gaining a mastery of requisite knowledge and skills combined with mentored field experience, so that they may meaningfully engage in bioethics inquiry and application in their specific field of professional expertise.



INDIVIDUALLY-TAILORED PLANS OF STUDY

The Master of Bioethics degree program is offered as either a 1-year (full-time) or 2-year (part-time) course of study. Students develop a personalized plan of study in conjunction with the Center for Bioethics faculty that includes:

- **Core Study** – Foundational courses covering theoretical and applied ethics, strategies of ethical justification, and historical through contemporary challenges in bioethics.
- **Electives** – Options to augment the Core Study program with course offerings at the Center for Bioethics, Harvard Medical School, and across Harvard University.
- **Concentration** – Degree candidates identify an area of focus and complete a course of study aligned with their interests and identified goals. Course options include specific areas of bioethics such as clinical ethics, health policy, or research ethics – or candidates can design a course of study of their own with the Center’s faculty and program director.
- **Capstone Experience** – A hands-on component to consolidate formal course learning. Whether a practical ethics experience working with a hospital or community ethics committee, participating on an Institutional Review Board, or completing a policy project, all candidates will have the opportunity to work with the Center’s faculty and the Master’s Program Director to tailor a field experience for their specific interests.



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The curriculum provides education on the key principles of bioethics and their application to contemporary challenges. The combination of core and elective courses offers students the opportunity to study a broad range of topics, including:

- Bedside ethics
- Ethics consultation
- Reproductive ethics
- End-of-life issues
- Neuroethics
- Ethics of human subject research
- Research safeguards
- Changes to the doctor-patient relationship
- Issues of public safety vs. the rights of individuals
- Confidentiality in an era of big data
- Regulatory and research compliance
- Ethics and novel research science
- Legal bioethics foundations
- Self-determination in healthcare
- Global health ethics
- Human subjects research
- Healthcare delivery systems
- Healthcare disparities
- Access to care
- Public policy and health law
- Physician assisted death
- Organ transplantation
- Brain death
- Bioethics and social science
- Religion and bioethics



Research Bioethics

Ethical theory and methodologies taught in the program prepare participants to:

- Develop and participate in research protocols with appropriate human protections in place
- Help their organizations through decisions that thoughtfully weigh the risks to research participants and the anticipated future benefits of treatment breakthroughs
- Understand bioethics regulatory and research compliance
- Map bioethics strategies to novel research and science
- Review, monitor and conduct responsible human and animal research

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The Master of Bioethics program places significant emphasis on the **practical application** of bioethics, helping students translate the foundational principles they learn in the program into **informed and effective approaches** to contemporary challenges in bioethics.

The multilayered curriculum also develops core competencies for assessing, resolving and advocating for bioethics in clinical, research and public sector workplaces. These include:

- Methods of bioethics reasoning
- Formulation of persuasive bioethics arguments
- Effective oral and written communication
- Advocacy on behalf of individuals and institutions
- Public policy development
- Anticipating and reacting to ethics and policy challenges raised by scientific advances and unpredicted events
- Gaining global perspectives
- Contributing to and influencing public discourse
- Reaching consensus across a broad range of disciplines
- Building connections
- Fostering synergy and collaboration among diverse stake holders in bioethics decisions





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HANDS ON EXPERIENCE

A mentored, hands-on capstone ethics experience complements the Master of Bioethics program, tailored to each student's professional expertise and interests. Our program participants are paired with faculty who are actively working on the front lines of bioethics.

Working in collaboration, students actually see and participate in the type of bioethics they will be practicing after graduation. They gain **practical, real-life understanding** applying what they've learned as they work alongside a bioethics leader in their area of concentration.

CLINICAL ETHICS

Clinicians coming to this program gain the knowledge and skills to:

- Build or lead ethics committees
- Institute practice-based improvements in ethically complex clinical scenarios
- Approach ethical decisions related to patient care ranging from reproductive issues to care of critically ill patients and end-of-life decisions
- Provide ethical consults to families and patients
- Help their organizations understand legal changes and their implications for patients
- Serve as an leader in the development of institutional policies and best practices

Robert D. Truog, MD

*Director, Center for Bioethics,
Harvard Medical School;
Frances Glessner Lee
Professor of Medical Ethics,
Anaesthesia, & Pediatrics,
Harvard Medical School;
Executive Director, Institute for
Professionalism & Ethical Practice;
Senior Associate in Critical Care Medicine,
Boston Children's Hospital*

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PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

Placement options for the program's capstone experience are designed with the program Director and faculty to align with each student's professional expertise and bioethics interest. Options include:

- **Clinical Bioethics** -- working in a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital with an ethics consultant, ethics support services, and clinical ethics committees.
- **Research Bioethics** -- working in a research compliance office; reviewing study protocols; attending IRB meetings; working with data safety monitoring boards and consent monitors
- **Public Policy** -- working with a state agency such as the Dept. of Children and Families, for example, on life-sustaining treatment decisions for children in foster care; or, working with the Dept. of Public Health on ethical aspects of crisis standards of care.

All candidates will have the opportunity to tailor a field experience for their specific professional interests.

“Students coming from industry -- biotechnology, pharmaceutical, genetic testing and medical device companies -- will get a rigorous grounding in ethical principles and regulations related to protecting research participants. They'll gain a rich understanding of ethical reasoning and analytical tools to gauge the ethical and legal implications of new technologies. “

*Christine Mitchell, RN
Executive Director,
Center for Bioethics,
Harvard Medical School*



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Candidates enrolled in the Master of Bioethics program may participate in year-round discussions and events hosted by the Harvard Medical School's Center for Bioethics. While the program's classes bring students through foundational theory, the Center introduces students to contemporary challenges and the approaches of the world's foremost experts in bioethics to these challenges.

On a regular basis, the Center hosts public forums, seminars, lecture series and consortiums on current and emerging bioethics challenges, including:

- Assisted reproductive technologies
- Complex end-of-life decisions
- Rationing limited healthcare resources
- Genetics, genomics, and mitochondrial transfer
- Global disparities in healthcare
- The role of the state in protecting the vulnerable
- Neuroscience ethics
- Communication of terminal diagnoses
- Parental rights in complex pediatric cases
- Organ donation and transplantation
- Definitions and applications of circulatory and brain death
- Privacy in an era of big data
- Synthetic biology
- Public engagement in health care ethics and policy
- Professionalism
- Biobanking
- Moral distress and nursing ethics
- Expanded access to research drugs and treatment



*THOUGHT
LEADERS AT THE
CUTTING EDGE OF
BIOETHICS*

Norman Spack, MD, Director, Gender Management Services at Boston Children's Hospital, speaking at Family Matters Conference 2015.

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OUR APPLICANTS

The Master of Bioethics program is designed for professionals who want to combine their front-line work with an expertise in bioethics. Candidates for this program include:

- **Working Professionals** holding a terminal degree in any discipline, especially those in the health sciences. A core group of applicants are expected from medicine, law, nursing, public health, social work, public policy, scientific and biotechnology research, journalism, and business.
- **Graduate Students** looking to enhance their training from a related field by combining it with a formal education in bioethics.
- **Recent Graduates** who desire a post-baccalaureate education in bioethics as part of an educational path towards another degree in a related field (e.g. MD, MPH, JD, MBA, MPP, PhD).

INQUIRIES

Bioethics_Masters@hms.harvard.edu

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Monday–Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM



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