

HMS Center for Bioethics Online Fellowship Certificate in Bioethics Policies

1. Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all participants (“Fellows”) enrolled in the Online Fellowship Certificate in Bioethics (“Program”) offered by the Center for Bioethics, Harvard Medical School.

- Program start date: The first scheduled day of program activities (orientation, classes, or required sessions), whether in person or online.
- Program Fee: The program fee charged for participation in the Fellowship, and excludes travel, lodging, and banking fees. Non-refundable deposit: A fixed amount retained to hold the Fellow’s seat in the Program and to cover administrative and processing costs associated with enrollment and cancellation. This deposit is applied toward the Program Fee but is not refundable except as noted in this policy.

2. Program Fee and Payment

1. Program Fee Amount For the 2026-2027 Fellowship in Bioethics, the Program Fee is \$15,495.

The full program fee is published on the Program website and in official recruitment materials for each learning-group year.

2. Payment Schedule

Deposit

The deposit holds a place in the learning-group and is applied toward the Program Fee. For academic year 2026-2027, the deposit is due two weeks after signing and returning the admission letter, and will reserve the Fellow’s seat in the learning-group.

The deposit is not refundable under any circumstances, except in the event of Program cancellation by Harvard (Section 7.3) or an approved exception under Special Circumstances (Section 8), and is due as communicated in the Program acceptance letter.

Program Fee

The full program fee is due no later than the third week in November. In 2026, this will be Nov 19.

3. Billing Steps

Upon receiving the acceptance letter from the Program Director and returning the signed form accepting the admittance, the Fellow will:

- Receive an invoice for the full program fee amount.
- Pay a portion of the invoice equal to the deposit (\$1,000) to reserve a seat.
- Payment plan – The Fellow may pay any amount between the time of receiving the invoice and the due date for the complete payment. Payments will be accounted toward the total invoice for the Program Fee.
- All Program Fees will be paid through Harvard's Accounts Receivable system and in USD.
- Bank charges, foreign transaction fees, wire transfer fees, or third-party processing fees are the Fellow's responsibility and are not reimbursable or refundable.

4. Non-Payment

Failure to pay the deposit or the remaining Program Fee by the stated deadlines may result in:

- Revocation of admission and release of the seat to another candidate;
- Ineligibility to participate in any program activities; and
- Ineligibility for any certificate or record of completion.

3. Withdrawal (Before Program Start) and Refunds

All withdrawal requests must be submitted in writing via email to bioethics_fellowship@hms.harvard.edu . Refund eligibility is based on the date the written request is received by the Program, and is relative to the Program start date:

1. Written notification must be received 30 or more days prior to Program start.
2. Written requests must be reviewed by Program Director(s).
3. Approved requests will receive a refund of 100% of the Program Fee paid, minus the non-refundable deposit.
 - a. Approved refunds will be issued to the original payment method.
 - b. Refund processing may take up to six (6) weeks from the date the request is approved; the timing of credit availability is dependent on the Fellow's financial institution.

4. Written notification received fewer than 30 days prior to Program start:
 - a. No Program Fee refund or deposit will be refunded.
 - b. The Fellow remains responsible for 100% of the Program Fee.
 - c. For expectations due to extenuating circumstances, please refer to section 8, below.

4. Withdrawals After Program Start

1. Voluntary Withdrawal

Once the Program has begun, no Program Fee or deposit refunds will be provided, regardless of the Fellow's level of participation or reason for withdrawal (including changes in professional responsibilities, personal circumstances, or dissatisfaction with the Program).

Impact on Standing and Documentation - Fellows who withdraw after the Program start date:

- Will lose access to course materials and learning platforms as of the effective date of withdrawal;
- Will not receive a certificate of completion or letter of successful participation; and
- May receive a notation (e.g., "Withdrawn") in internal Program records, if maintained.

2. Administrative Removal by the Program

The Program reserves the right to remove a Fellow without refund for:

- Non-payment or financial fraud;
- Violations of academic integrity or learner conduct policies;
- Disruptive behavior or risk to the community; or
- Persistent lack of participation that undermines the educational environment.
- Any other failure to comport with HMS and University standards and expectations.

Fellows who are administratively removed are not eligible for any Program Fee refund or deferral.

5. Deferrals

This is a learning-group-based Fellowship with limited enrollment. A deferral to a future learning-group is not guaranteed and is considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to Program capacity and approval.

If a deferral is granted:

- The paid Program Fee may be applied to future fee requirements but only within a 12-month timespan.
- The Fellow is responsible for any increase in the Program Fee from year to year.

6. External Funding

1. Institutional and External Funding

Fellows receiving scholarships, grants, or sponsorships from their employer or other external source are responsible for:

- Ensuring that any required documentation for the funding is completed at their home institution; and
- Ensuring that all funds are disbursed to Harvard by the Program Fee deadline.

If external funds are rescinded, delayed, or reduced, the Fellow remains financially responsible for the full Program Fee balance by the payment deadline.

2. Refunds

Any eligible refund will be returned to the original payer in accordance with Harvard financial policies and practices.

7. Program Modification or Cancellation by Harvard

1. Program Modification

The Program reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the schedule, faculty, or delivery format (e.g., switching from in-person to online) without providing a refund, as long as overall learning objectives are preserved.

2. Program Postponement

If the Program start is significantly postponed, currently enrolled Fellows will be offered:

- Transfer of their enrollment and Program Fee to the rescheduled dates; or

- A full Program Fee refund if they decline the new dates.
- Program Cancellation

In the unlikely event that the Program is canceled in full by Harvard before it begins, Fellows will receive a 100% refund of Program Fee paid, including any deposits.

Harvard is not responsible for reimbursement of any non-Program Fee expenses (e.g., travel, lodging, visas).

8. Special Circumstances and Appeals

1. Extenuating Circumstances

Fellows facing serious, documented emergencies (e.g., significant illness, bereavement, major natural disaster) may submit a written request for an exception to this policy to the Program Director via bioethics_fellowship@hms.harvard.edu.

Supporting documentation and a written statement will be required. Decisions will be made at the sole discretion of the Program and in alignment with broader HMS policies.

2. Appeals Process

Appeals must be submitted within 30 days of the event leading to the request, using the program email bioethics_fellowship@hms.harvard.edu. The leadership team for the Center for Bioethics will review appeals.

Appeal decisions are final and are not subject to further review.

9. Policy Changes

Harvard Medical School and the Center for Bioethics reserve the right to modify this policy at any time. Any changes will apply prospectively and will be communicated in writing to enrolled Fellows.