

BIOETHICS

Graduate Program Head	Jonathan H. Marks
Program Code	BIOET
Campus(es)	University Park
Degrees Conferred	Dual-Title
The Graduate Faculty	View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/index.cfm?searchType=fac&prog=BIOET)

Students electing to pursue this program through participating departments will earn a degree with a dual-title at the Ph.D. level, i.e., Ph.D. in (major program name) and Bioethics.

The following graduate programs offer dual degrees in bioethics: Anthropology, Biobehavioral Health, Communication Arts and Sciences, Kinesiology, Nursing.

The Bioethics dual-title program is housed in the College of the Liberal Arts with administrative support (e.g., staff support) provided by the Rock Ethics Institute. The Bioethics Program Committee, which contains representatives from participating colleges and departments, maintains the program's definition and goals, identifies faculty and courses relevant to the program, and recommends policies and procedures for the program's operation.

The dual-title graduate degree in bioethics will acknowledge and foster scholarly work across disciplines, increasing the intellectual rigor and breadth of graduate work through immersion in both bioethics and the primary discipline. The dual-title degree will also provide opportunities for students to learn how to synthesize knowledge and develop expertise within and across disciplinary boundaries.

In addition to the intellectual and academic advantages of interdisciplinarity, the dual-title degree program will strengthen the reputation of individual programs/departments through an innovative degree program, increase recruitment of top quality graduate students, and increase job opportunities for students after graduation.

Admission Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs>).

Dual-title Bioethics graduate students will first be admitted to their major programs in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the Graduate Council and the major program. They will then be admitted to graduate study in the Bioethics program by an admissions committee consisting of faculty affiliated with the Bioethics program. Applicants should have a junior/senior cumulative average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) and an appropriate background in undergraduate course work. Prospective dual-title students will write a statement of purpose that addresses the ways in which their research and professional goals reflect an interest in interdisciplinary bioethics research.

Degree Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs>).

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General requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. in Bioethics are:

- Required course work described below.
- Comprehensive examination in bioethics and the related field, with the format and content to be determined by agreement with the major department.
- Dissertation on a bioethics-related topic or that includes a substantial bioethics component.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
BIOET 501	Perspectives and Methods in Bioethics	3
BIOET 502	Perspectives in Macro-Bioethics	3
BIOET 590	Bioethics Colloquium	1
3 additional BIOET credits at the 500 level ¹		3
8 credits from a list of approved electives at the 400 and 500 level, with at least two credits at the 500 level ²		8
Total Credits		18

¹ With the approval of the Director of the Bioethics Graduate Program, students may also fulfill the requirement for the three additional 500-level BIOET credits through one of four alternatives:

- BIOET 590 (since the topics will vary from semester, students may take this course in subsequent semesters for additional credit)
- BIOET 594
- BIOET 596
- an additional elective course determined to satisfy this requirement on the grounds that the syllabus indicates a sufficiently strong bioethics content.

² Students in the program will take the remaining credits by choosing from a wide variety of existing elective courses at the 400 and 500 levels from a list maintained by the Director of the Bioethics Graduate Program in consultation with the Bioethics Program Committee. Students also have the right to petition the Director of the Bioethics Graduate Program to request that additional courses be added to the list of electives. The elective courses chosen by the student must be approved by either the Director of the Bioethics Graduate Program or, with the agreement of the Director, by another member of the Bioethics Program Committee. In addition, students may pursue an internship or practicum (BIOET 595), provided that this is approved in advance by the Director of the Bioethics Graduate Program.

Language Competency Requirements

The student will fulfill the language requirement specified by the major department through which the student is admitted to the dual-title degree program.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Bioethics program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both the primary graduate degree program and Bioethics. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

Committee Composition

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation>), the Ph.D. committee of a Bioethics dual-title doctoral degree student must include at least one member of the Bioethics Graduate Faculty. Where major programs are supportive of this, graduate students will be encouraged to have a second committee member so qualified. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs may serve in a combined role. If the committee chair does not serve in this combined role, the faculty member representing the Bioethics program must be designated as co-chair of the committee. The dual-title representative(s) will be expected to participate in constructing and grading comprehensive examination questions that cover the secondary area of study.

Comprehensive Exams

The faculty member (or members) affiliated with the Bioethics program will be responsible for administering a portion of the comprehensive exam that will require the student to demonstrate an understanding of various theoretical and methodological approaches to bioethics, and an ability to apply them to issues and problems (including, where appropriate, practical problems) in their major field.

Dissertation

A dissertation on a bioethics-related topic or with a substantial bioethics component is required of students in the dual-title Ph.D. program. The bioethics-related topic of the dissertation or the bioethics component will be approved by the student's committee. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding>) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants>) set by The Graduate School.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Bioethics (BIOET) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/bioet>)

Contact

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