

# Biomedical Ethics



## WHAT IS BIOMEDICAL ETHICS?

Terminology: **Medical Ethics, Bioethics, Medical Humanities**

Many terms are related to bioethics and are sometimes used interchangeably although there are subtleties of meaning. In general, bioethics has become the overarching term under which the others are captured.

**Medical Ethics** refers to the ethics of the physician-patient relationship or the provider-patient relationship, includes all general duties a provider has to a patient, e.g., duty help the patient and avoid harming him or her, as well as specific rules of conduct, e.g., duties of confidentiality.

**Health Care Ethics** is nearly co-extensive with medical ethics but is the preferred term when one aims to be inclusive of other health-care providers such as nurses and physician-assistants or other members of the health-care team or supporters of the health-care organization who have duties to patients.

**Bioethics** literally means “life ethics.” It is usually used in a way that includes medical ethics as a subset. (For this reason, you also see the term “biomedical ethics.”) As the more general category, bioethics seems to include additional issues that are not necessarily a part of medical ethics, e.g., research ethics, ethical issues related to new scientific techniques such as cloning).

## BIOMEDICAL ETHICISTS EXPLORE:

- The impact of technological advances (such as genomics, stem cell research, etc.)
- Neuroethics
- Issues of health care access and public health policy
- End of life issues
- Medicine and the media
- Medicine and society
- Empathy and the experience of illness
- And many more...

## FOUR MAJOR PRINCIPLES OF MEDICAL ETHICS

- **Autonomy:** the right for an individual to make his or her own choice.
- **Nonmaleficence:** the principle that “above all, do no harm,” as stated in the Hippocratic Oath.
- **Beneficence:** the principle of acting with the best interest of the other in mind.
- **Justice:** a concept that emphasizes fairness and equality among individuals.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

- Faculty positions in health professions schools, colleges, and universities
- Policy Analyst overseeing human subjects research
- Clinical ethicist overseeing and consulting on hospital policies and practice
- Directing or working within non-profits that support professional ethics.

## MS IN MEDICAL ETHICS ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS (AT THE UNIVERSITY OF

# BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

## PENNSYLVANIA)

- Completed baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university by the time of enrollment
- Resume/CV
- Essay responses:
  - Give a brief personal history describing your career goals
  - Describe and discuss an issue or dilemma in biomedical research or health care that you think requires advanced study in bioethics
- Writing sample
- Three letters of recommendation

## MS BIOMEDICAL ETHICS CURRICULUM (AT LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE)

The MSBE curriculum includes 12 required courses and a capstone experience.

### Core Courses

- History and Scope of Bioethics Compliance: Patient Rights & Safety Clinical Ethics I
- Clinical Ethics II
- Conflict Resolution, Mediation, and Communications Building Cultural Competence
- Organizational Ethics Research Ethics Public Health Ethics
- Clinician as the Problem

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- A Bioethicist by Any Name: <http://www.bioethics.net/2018/01/a-bioethicist-by-any-name/>
- Bioethics in Action, Part I: Helping Students Explore Difficult Questions in Health Care: [www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/learning/lesson-plans/bioethics-in-action-part-i-helping-students-explore-difficult-questions-in-health-care.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/learning/lesson-plans/bioethics-in-action-part-i-helping-students-explore-difficult-questions-in-health-care.html)
- Building bioethics into the future of life sciences innovation: [cen.acs.org/biological-chemistry/genomics/Building-bioethics-future-life-sciences/96/i34](http://cen.acs.org/biological-chemistry/genomics/Building-bioethics-future-life-sciences/96/i34)
- The future of ethics and biomedicine: An interview: [scopeblog.stanford.edu/2018/10/23/the-future-of-ethics-and-biomedicine-an-interview/](http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2018/10/23/the-future-of-ethics-and-biomedicine-an-interview/)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Biomed Central [biomedcentral.com/](http://biomedcentral.com/)
- The Center for Biomedical Ethics and Society [vumc.org/cbmes/](http://vumc.org/cbmes/)
- The Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity: [cbhd.org/](http://cbhd.org/)
- U of Washington Ethics in Medicine: [depts.washington.edu/bioethx/toc.html](http://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/toc.html)

## COLLECTIONS OF SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

- BMC Medical Ethics: [bmcmmedethics.biomedcentral.com/articles](http://bmcmmedethics.biomedcentral.com/articles)
- Issues in Biomedical Ethics [global.oup.com/academic/content/series/i/issues-in-biomedical-ethics-ibe/?cc=us&lang=en&](http://global.oup.com/academic/content/series/i/issues-in-biomedical-ethics-ibe/?cc=us&lang=en&)
- Markkula Center for Applied Ethics: [scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/bioethics/resources/articles/articles-on-medical-ethics/](http://scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/bioethics/resources/articles/articles-on-medical-ethics/)