Introduction to Bioethics

Bioethics tackles fundamental questions of how we should act, and how we should live in relation to emerging technologies in biomedicine and the life sciences.

Careers in bioethics are varied and incorporate skills derived from a range of disciplines, including philosophy, law, social sciences, life sciences, medicine, public health, anthropology and politics. In a bioethics career, these skills can be applied to research and to different forms of practice, including clinical and policy work. Depending on the position, you may be required to show experience in ‘the field’, clinic or laboratory in addition to relevant academic qualification.

Diverse agencies and organisations provide jobs to graduating bioethics students, or offer internship placements.

See below for examples and links to organisations, agencies and groups that can provide more information about career choices and opportunities in bioethics.

International Organizations

American Association for Bioethics & Humanities
www.asbh.org

International Association for Bioethics
http://bioethics-international.org/

World Health Organisation
www.who.int

A specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. Details of their internship programme: www.who.int/employment/internship.

The Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) is an international non-governmental organization whose primary objective is to strengthen research for health and innovation systems, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries

Unesco Bioethics

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
www.gatesfoundation.org

Grant-making foundation supports initiatives in education, world health and population, and community giving.

Government Agencies

Department for Health
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

UK ministerial department, supported by 23 agencies and public bodies creating national policies and legislation; providing funding; assuring the delivery and continuity of services; and accounting to Parliament.

Health Research Authority
www.hra.nhs.uk

UK Special Health Authority which aim to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health research, and to streamline the regulation of research.

Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology
www.parliament.uk/post


Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
www.hfea.gov.uk

The UK’s independent regulator overseeing the use of gametes and embryos in fertility treatment and research.

Policy Consultation and Campaigning

Nuffield Council on Bioethics
www.nuffieldbioethics.org

An independent body that examines and reports on ethical issues in biology and medicine.
Wellcome Trust
www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Society-and-ethics/index.htm
Global charitable foundation dedicated to achieving extraordinary improvements in biomedical research and medical humanities. The Wellcome Trust has a Medical Humanities programme, including a grants scheme that supports research on the social and ethical aspects of biomedical research and healthcare innovations.

Biobank Ethics and Governance Council
www.egcukbiobank.org.uk
An independent committee established by the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council to act as an independent guardian of the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Framework (EGF) and advise on its revision.

Gene Watch UK
www.genewatch.org/
GeneWatch UK is a not-for-profit group that monitors developments in genetic technologies from a public interest, human rights, environmental protection and animal welfare perspective.

King’s Fund
www.kingsfund.org.uk
An independent charity working to improve health and health care in England by shaping policy and practice through research and analysis

PHG Foundation
www.phgfoundation.org/
Think tank concerned with public health-related science policy. Offer internships & welcome volunteers (see website for details).

Sciencewise
www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/
“The aim of Sciencewise is to support policy makers to commission and use… public dialogue as an integral part of policy making. This will help to ensure that all future policy involving science, technology and innovation is informed by public concerns and aspirations and based on all the available evidence.”

Sense about Science
www.senseaboutscience.org/
“… works with scientists and members of the public to change public debates and to equip people to make sense of science and evidence. Sense About Science responds to hundreds of requests for… advice and questions on scientific evidence each year. We chase down dodgy science and mobilise networks of scientists and community groups to counter it. We also invite scientists to publish corrections of misreported research.” Website has information on volunteering and working for the organisation.

British Bioscience Science in Society Stream
www.bbsrc.ac.uk/society/science-in-society-index.aspx

Pharmaceutical Companies
Lilly
http://www.lilly.com/research-development/approach/research-ethics/Pages/bioethics.aspx

Research and Academia
Progress Educational Trust
http://www.progress.org.uk/objectives

Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org
The world's largest independent cancer research charity conducting research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease

Economic and Social Research Council
www.esrc.ac.uk
UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues which support independent, high quality research

Council of Europe:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/healthbioethic/default_en.asp

King’s PhD program in Social Science, Health & Medicine
www.kcl.ac.uk/sssp/departments/sshm/study

General Medical Council

Institute of Medical Ethics
http://www.institutedofmedicalaethics.org/
Charitable organisation dedicated to improving education and debate in medical ethics. The IME is founder and co-owner of the Journal of Medical Ethics (JME) a leading international journal reflecting the whole field of medical ethics.

Oxford Bioethics network:
http://oxbionet.medsci.ox.ac.uk/
Comprises seven research centres in the University of Oxford concerned with the ethical, legal and social aspects of biomedical and healthcare developments.

Cumberland Lodge:
http://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk
Educational charity that organises conferences on social issues, moral questions and matters of spiritual and ethical interest, with a particular emphasis on engaging young people.

Additional Career Resources

The Hastings Centre
www.thehastingscenter.org/
US based independent, nonpartisan, and non-profit bioethics research institute. Site has a wealth of useful resources, reports and current awareness in the field. Features a comprehensive jobs board.

Bioethics & Society at King’s College London
www.bioethicsandsociety.com
The UK Nuffield Council on Bioethics
http://nuffieldbioethics.org/about/bioethics
http://nuffieldbioethics.org/about/links/

Defines bioethics, discusses possible career paths and provides links that provide a range of general bioethics resources:

The Career Center of the American Association for Bioethics and Medical Humanities
http://careercenter.asbh.org/jobseekers/
Excellent and up to date resource for current job openings in bioethics. Although the jobs board is not particularly large, it does feature a number of current vacancies within the profession (principally in North America). The site also includes more general (non-sector specific) careers advice.
Additional job openings are advertised on the website of the American Journal of Bioethics.

www.bioethics.net/jobs

And on the relevant section of the Hastings Centre Report:

www.thehastingscenter.org/BioethicsWire/Jobs/

The Berman Institute of Bioethics at John Hopkins University provides the following recommendations for students seeking a career in bioethics (please note this is also skewed towards the US):

www.bioethicsinstitute.org/people/bioethics-careers

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The Careers Group believes that all information provided in this publication is correct at the time of publication. This material can be provided in alternate formats. Please discuss your requirements with a member of staff.

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