

Bioethics

MA PGDip PGCert



Location: North campus, (Ladbroke House & Tower Building)

Starts September	Yes
Starts February	No
Full-time	Yes
Part-time day	Yes
Part-time evening	No

Aims of the course

Increasingly, societies across the globe are engaging in investigating the ethical and social implications of rapid developments in biomedicine and genetics. As new scientific applications are applied to healthcare practice and scientific research, the impact upon individuals and populations will strengthen and have greater impact on lives. This interdisciplinary course offers students the opportunity to study at an advanced level with various ethical approaches and traditions. The MA focuses upon the practices and standards applied from bench to bedside in biomedical, healthcare and wider health-related contexts, alongside theories of social explanation and human rights issues. It will give students the opportunity to study major topics in applied ethics related to health and bioscience, to explore issues faced by health workers and bioscientists, and to develop practical skills in bioethical decision-making relevant to professional practice in these areas. It has a distinctive focus on health and human rights, and engagement with cultural diversity in bioethical decision-making. The course combines the research based specialist knowledge of the Health subject team in the Department of Applied Social Sciences with the expertise of staff from the School of Human Sciences in the Faculty of Life Sciences.

Duration and attendance

Full-time: 1 year

Part-time: 2 – 4 years

Dates/timetable

Autumn semester: September – January

Spring semester: February – June

Course Structure

The MA is a one-year full-time course involving 30 weeks of taught modules divided into two 15 week semesters commencing in September and February. The part-time mode follows a similar pattern over two years. As a full-time student you will take 4 core compulsory modules, 2 optional modules, and a triple-weighted dissertation module, producing a dissertation of around 15,000 words.

Core modules:

Applied Ethics – this module focuses on the advanced study of applied ethics through an examination of a range of ethical theories and approaches applied to a wide selection of contemporary ethical dilemmas. Normative ethical theories studied include: deontology, utilitarianism, care ethics, virtue ethics, situation ethics and existential ethics, amongst others. There is a focus on health and human rights, and cultural diversity in ethics and students will consider the relationship between personal ethical beliefs and professional ethical standards and policies.

Ethical Issues in Healthcare – provides an opportunity for an in-depth enquiry at advanced level into the ethical dimensions of contemporary healthcare. This module also examines the application of ethical theories and approaches to practical dilemmas in healthcare, for example, the ethics of health promotion; public health ethics; resource allocation in healthcare; practitioner-client relationships; euthanasia; nursing ethics; health as a human right; global healthcare ethics, etc. Relevant codes and professional standards are examined.

Ethical Issues in Biomedical Science – formally examines the ethical theories applied to selected topics in biomedical science, for example embryonic stem cell research; laboratory-based research; the use of assisted reproductive technologies; genetic screening; transplantation; cloning; genetic engineering; drug development and clinical trials as well as genetic modification of food. Relevant professional codes and policies are studied.

Social Research: Principles and Practice of Social Research – the overall purpose of this module is to offer students an introduction to the concepts and theories that underpin social research methodology. It provides a framework for current debates about research and policy whilst emphasising the relationship between the intellectual and practical aspects of social research.

Optional modules:

Medical Genetics – involves a review of human disease with a genetic component, relating phenotype to genotype wherever possible. This includes from monogenic disorders to complex, multifactorial diseases with a consideration of hereditary mechanisms not linked to DNA sequence (genomic imprinting). The use of animal models to further understand genetic diseases and develop strategies for gene therapy.

Mental Health Promotion – is aimed at anyone interested in a focus on promoting mental well-being. This includes those working on policy, or providers of primary health or mental health services, or a wide range of other types of voluntary, public, or private sector services. It aims to provide students with a broad knowledge base from which to construct and critique interventions designed to promote mental health and/or prevent mental ill-health.

Public Health and Health Promotion – explores theory, policy and practical aspects of public health and health promotion within a World Health Organisation context and a Public Health approach. The main focus will be key theories, policies and practices influencing developments in public health and health promotion at international, national and local levels. Relevant initiatives and research in strategies and priorities for public health and health promotion such as health inequalities; participation and involvement; partnership working; social determinants of health; life styles and behaviour and population groups will also be analysed.

Health in the City – this multi-disciplinary module examines health and health care in urban regions. It focuses on the notion of 'the urban health crisis', which is examined by reference to London and other selected 'world cities'. Hence, students will examine health challenges experienced in urban environments by patients, communities, health workers, service providers and local authorities against a background of globalisation. The module uses a public health approach grounded in the impact of social and economic factors on health.

Epidemiology of Emerging Infectious Diseases – this module focuses on the occurrence of emerging infectious diseases, their origins, evolution and epidemiological features that facilitates their adaptation to, and transmission within, human populations. A range of microbial pathogens will be reviewed and emphasis will be placed on their impact on public health and strategies for disease control.

Issues in Contemporary Health Policy – aims to provide an overview of health related issues confronting developed, transitional and developing countries.

Nutrition, Epidemiology and Public Health – focuses on the critical evaluation of assessing dietary intake and examining the role of nutrition in health and how this can be applied to public health policy.

Dissertation

This is normally the last part of the course, commencing from the start of the spring semester, in which you plan, design and implement a piece of original research into an aspect of Bioethics, and write it up as a 15,000-word dissertation. You will be allocated a supervisor for your dissertation and you are supported by regular tutorials. The dissertation combines a reflection on the theories and issues covered in taught modules, with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills you have acquired throughout the course. The dissertation must take the form of a critical analysis of the literature and theoretical issues in the field of Bioethics.

Research

The MA programme draws on research carried out by staff in the Department of Applied Social Sciences Health Group, which is located in the Centre for Primary Health and Social Care, and research undertaken within the School of Human Sciences in the Faculty of Life Sciences. Staff are involved in several of the University's Research Institutes, including the Human Rights and Social Justice Research Institute, and the Institute for Health Research and Policy.

Teaching and Learning

Each module consists of a mixture of scheduled classes, guided learning and self-directed learning. Teaching and learning is undertaken through lectures, seminars, discussions, group activities, workshops, tutorials and self-managed study. A variety of assessment tasks are used including essays, individual and group presentations, and a final dissertation.

Career opportunities

Successful completion of this course offers improved career opportunities in the areas of healthcare, biomedical science research, medicine, public policy decision-making, membership of health-related ethics committees and health management. The NHS and public bodies/ethics committees in health-related fields are now expecting their employees/members to have an awareness of ethical issues, and capacities for ethical decision-making in contexts of value diversity; completing this course will equip students with the relevant skills and knowledge for these career pathways. (For example, genetic counsellors must be able to deliver genetics services to diverse populations, and therefore require capacities for culturally competent ethical decision-making; mental health practitioners similarly need to be ethically aware in their engagement with different client groups). The programme is also excellent preparation for further research or study.

Fees 09/10*

Full-time (EU)	£4,950
Full-time (non EU)	£9,720
Part-time per module (EU)	£580
Part-time per module (non EU)	£1,080

*Tuition fees are subject to change, please contact the Admissions Office

Entry Requirements

Normally an upper second-class Honours degree in a relevant subject: Social Sciences, especially Health Studies or Mental Health studies; Biomedical Science, Applied Biology or other Life Science subjects such as Philosophy; Ethics and Political Theory. Those with relevant professional qualifications or extensive professional experience will also be considered.

How to apply

Apply directly to the University, Please contact Admission for an application form or you may download one at www.londonmet.ac.uk/how-to-apply

Further information

Admissions Office
London Metropolitan University
166-220 Holloway Road
London N7 8DB

Tel: 020 7133 4202

Email: admissions@londonmet.ac.uk

Web: www.londonmet.ac.uk

For further academic questions contact the course leader:

Alya Khan

Tel: 020 7133 4144

Email: a.khan@londonmet.ac.uk

Open Days/Evenings

You can also come to one of our open days or evenings, held throughout the year. See our website www.londonmet.ac.uk/opendays or call the Admissions Office for up-to-date details.

We do everything we can to ensure that information in this leaflet is correct, however details may change and we cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.