About Bioethics

Bioethics draws on philosophy, science, sociology, history, economics, law, and other disciplines in the attempt to answer some of society’s most challenging questions on issues such as genetic discrimination, human enhancement, cloning, stem cell research, buying and selling human organs, epidemics, and global health justice.

Why study Bioethics?

Bioethics aims to develop ethical thinking about the latest developments in healthcare and biomedical technology, anticipating possible future developments, and assessing what should be done if and when these developments become a reality.

It is concerned with controversial topics that have profound implications for the future of humanity and society. It is a general interest field of study that is relevant and important to everyone—and it will promote development of all-purpose skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. The Monash Centre for Human Bioethics has a strong reputation as a world-leading centre. It has recently been designated as a World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Bioethics. That makes it one of seven such centres worldwide, and part of a global network.

Complementary areas of study

You can choose from a range of areas to enhance your degree with a minor in Bioethics. Some areas of study which complement Bioethics are:

- Philosophy
- Human rights
- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Media and communications
- Law
- Biology
- Biomedical sciences
- Medicine/Nursing

What are some of the topics Bioethics explores?

In your first year you take foundation units such as:

- Bioethics: current controversies
- Bioethics, justice and the law
- Life, death and morality (Introduction to Philosophy A)

In your second and third year you will be able to build up your minor or electives based on your interests and chosen career path, units include:

- Ethics
- The human body and the international market place
- The moral psychology of evil
- Philosophical issues in applied ethics
- Issues in political theory
- Political philosophy
- Environmental ethics

How does Bioethics fit into your degree?

You can take Bioethics as a minor or as elective units within your degree.

Career prospects

As a Monash graduate, you can look forward to many dynamic career opportunities.

The completion of individual Bioethics units or a Bioethics minor is especially valuable if you’re planning a career in:

- Life sciences
- Healthcare
- Law and/or public policy

You may also want to explore careers specifically in Bioethics (which may or may not require postgraduate study) such as:

- Clinical and research ethics at hospitals or other healthcare/research institutions
- Roles with non-government organisations (NGOs) or advocacy groups
- Science policy
- Education

A Bioethics minor might also be especially valuable for those who aim to pursue postgraduate study of medicine.

From our students

“Studying Bioethics has enabled me to hone my skills in analytic philosophy whilst exploring ethical issues raised by recent and potential advances in medicine and biotechnology. Bioethics has provided me with opportunities to combine my interest in philosophy with other engaging areas of study in the humanities and sciences. It is very satisfying to work in a field that has such broad and practical relevance to contemporary moral questions, and is able to challenge and shape how we think about them.”

Julian Koplin
Current student

For more information:

future.arts.monash.edu/ug-bioethics