

New Program Proposal

Bioethics, Graduate Certificate

The Graduate Certificate in Bioethics blends the missions and values of the medical field and social work for equitable service provision, knowledgeable development of ethical policies and just professional decision making at the institutional, local, or state level. This program provides an interdisciplinary exploration of bioethical issues that arise in health care, biological sciences and emerging technologies. It is most applicable to students with interests in nursing, social work, law, public policy, public health, philosophy, and theology.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet general University of Missouri-St. Louis Graduate School admission requirements.

Certificate Requirements

Core

PHIL 4435 or PHIL 4438	Classical Ethical Theory Recent Ethical Theory	3
PHIL 5558	Current Issues in Bioethics	3

Electives **6**

Choose two of the following:

SOC WK 6443	Health Care Policy (required for MSW students)	
NURSE 4900	Ethics and Values in Population Health	
PHIL 5530	Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy	
SOC WK 6630	Diagnosis and Related Pharmacology for Social Work Practice	
SOC WK 4755	Poverty, Human Rights, and Social Justice	
SOC WK 5635	Social Work Practice with LGBT Populations: Deconstructing the Alphabet Soup	
SOC WK 6645	Social Work in Healthcare Settings	

Total Hours 12

No more than 6 total credits can be earned through courses at the 4000 level.

Additional elective courses can be included with the approval of the Bioethics program coordinator.

If other departments are affected by this proposal, please secure "sign-offs" and indicate for each department the following:

Department	Contact Person	Phone #	Objections
Nursing	D Saleska		No
Social Work	F Sichling		No
Philosophy	J Delston		No

Justification for request:

We propose this program not just in response to the recommendations of the Bioethics Commission, but also because current and previous graduate students in Social Work, Philosophy and Nursing have expressed interest in a bioethics concentration area, suggesting a demand. Also, in recognition of the highly uneven impact of the COVID pandemic on different demographic groups, professional accrediting bodies such as the Council on Social Work Education have started to revise their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for 2022 to place a much stronger emphasis on social work programs’ ability to document and measure students’ capacity to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior and advance human rights, social, racial, economic and environmental justice. Across health care and social service professions, the need to enhance skills necessary to confront and resolve emerging real world bioethical dilemmas has been exemplified by current health crises including the COVID-19 pandemic or the opioid epidemic.

As a regional anchor institution, UMSL is uniquely situated to serve this need due to its world class nursing program, its top-10 nationally ranked philosophy MA, and its powerhouse social work school. In addition, The UM system is investing in precision health medicine and research with the NextGen Precision Health Institute, offering timely opportunities for collaboration and for UMSL to help serve those bioethical needs.

- A bioethics certificate would be attractive to new students as evidenced by the number of students we get who write master’s theses on the topic and/or ask for independent studies on bioethics. For example, despite offering multiple bioethics classes at UMSL already, faculty have taught 3 independent studies on bioethics in recent years. A bioethics certificate would help us recruit students to UMSL by aligning our course offerings with their stated interests.
- This certificate program would complement existing UMSL programs in nursing, philosophy and social work and distinguish those programs from similar programs offered by other institutions in the region.
- While there is demonstrable external market demand for this certificate (see next section), this demand is currently almost entirely met by private institutions, showing the need for a local public option provided by an anchor institution like UMSL