

Quality Assurance

Masters, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Ethics and Law

Programme Specification Template: Postgraduate

Information for students: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It is reviewed and updated every year as part of Keele's Curriculum Annual Review and Development process. The document aims to clarify to potential and current students what you can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.

This programme specification applies to students starting the programme from September 2017 onwards.

Names of programme(s) and award title(s)	MA in Medical Ethics and Law PG Dip in Medical Ethics and Law PG Cert in Medical Ethics and Law
Mode of study	Full time / part time / modular
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	7
Duration:	One year (full time) Two years (part time) Up to 5 years modular

External Examiner(s) names: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/ga/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

Advances in biomedical technology, changing moral attitudes, and developments in law, combine to generate difficult ethical, legal, policy challenges for those involved in the delivery of healthcare. This programme provides an opportunity to gain a deeper and more systematic understanding of these issues and to explore the moral problems faced by healthcare professionals and those involved in healthcare management and policy. It also aims to provide a foundation for pursuing further study at doctoral level for those interested in doing so.

Applications are welcome from people with a professional or other serious interest in Medical Ethics and Law, including (but not limited to) doctors, nurses, health care managers, intercalating medical students, radiographers, chaplains, charity and voluntary workers, social workers, hospice directors, medical and pharmaceutical researchers, dentists, veterinary practitioners and health care educators. While the programme is primarily aimed at healthcare professionals, it is open to anyone who is suitably qualified and who can demonstrate sufficient academic aptitude. The programme has increasingly attracted recent graduates who wish either to build on previous study in law or ethics or to develop their studies in a new direction.

MA in Medical Ethics and Law is run by the Centre for Professional Ethics and School of Law at Keele University. It is one of England's longest established master's programmes in this subject area, having first been presented in 1987.

Aims

The aims of the MA in Medical Ethics and Law are to:

- Provide students with a high quality education in medical ethics and law
- Provide students with an adequate basis in both knowledge and skills for further work in the subject
- Provide students with knowledge, or the means to acquire knowledge and critical abilities
- Provide students with the skills and knowledge they will need in order to deal adequately with the ethical problems and dilemmas which they may face in their day-to-day professional work
- Provide students with awareness and understanding of the main contemporary issues in the academic literature on medical ethics and law.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the MA in Medical Ethics and Law will be able to:

- describe, analyse and evaluate important theories and arguments in applied ethics, and of their relevance to healthcare policy and practice;
- describe, analyse and evaluate selected key arguments and issues in medical ethics;

- critically evaluate complex ethical and medical legal texts, including contemporary research-based materials, and primary legal materials (e.g. cases and statutes);
- apply ethical theories and arguments to practical problems in medical ethics and law, construct ethical and legal arguments in written form and defend those arguments against criticism;
- conduct a detailed and systematic investigation of an ethical and/or legal problem and reach conclusions based on sound argument and understanding of relevant research-based literature.

Keele Graduate Attributes

Engagement with this programme will enable students to further develop their intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of students' studies and activities. Whilst students will undoubtedly have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help students develop further as well-rounded postgraduates capable of making positive and valued contributions in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life they engage in during and after their studies at Keele. Please refer to the programme web pages for a statement of how the Keele Graduate Attributes can be achieved through full engagement in the programme and other educational opportunities at Keele.

2. How is the Programme taught?

The MA in Medical Ethics and Law involves both taught modules and a chance for students to write a dissertation on a topic of their choosing related to the course. Teaching occurs in four three-day blocks that run between September and May. This structure has proved particularly popular with healthcare professionals in full-time employment, as it allows them to combine study with full-time work, and with family and other commitments. It also enables students who are based in all areas of the UK and beyond to attend. Contact between students and staff, and between students, is facilitated between blocks to create a distinctive student community.

The programme is divided into two parts. Part 1 is a taught component that makes up the PGDip element of the course. Part 2 is the MA dissertation component. Part 2 also has one 'study day' at which students are provided with training on how to research and write the dissertation, plus an opportunity to discuss their plans with the course team and their peers.

Teaching for Part 1 of the programme is delivered in short intense blocks, enabling those in full-time employment to do the course part-time and to fit it around the demands of their work wherever they are based. Each student is assigned a personal supervisor from the outset, whom they can contact for help or advice at any time during the course.

We regard high levels of student participation in discussion as particularly important for teaching and learning in this area, and employ teaching techniques which encourage this wherever possible. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds within health care (and beyond) and from many diverse geographical locations. Past and current students have reported that meeting and exchanging ideas with others who work in different fields and in different parts of the country is one of the major benefits of the course.

Part 2 of the programme requires students to undertake their own (library-based) research and write a dissertation on a topic of their choosing of between 15-20,000 words. Each student is allocated a supervisor for their dissertation who will help them with advice over topic choice and carrying out research. They will also comment on draft work in accordance with a prescribed service level and timetable.

Programme Team

The programme is taught by academic ethicists and lawyers from Keele's Centre for Professional Ethics and School of Law. Most members of the teaching team have extensive experience of teaching postgraduate applied ethics and law courses. They are well aware of the special challenges that may face mature students and those combining study with full-time work; we do our utmost to offer a supportive and stimulating environment for learning.

3. What is the Structure of the Programme?

The MA programme consists of four 30-credit taught modules and a 60-credit dissertation, as follows:

Semester 1	ETH-40044	Moral Theory and Medical Ethics	30 credits
	ETH-40045	Principles of Medical Law	30 credits
Semester 2	ETH-40040	Life, Death and the Human Body	30 credits
	ETH-40042	Healthcare, Justice and Society	30 credits
Full year	ETH-40041	Medical Ethics and Law Dissertation	60 credits

These may be taken by part-time, full-time or modular study. All the above modules are compulsory for the MA in Medical Ethics and Law. However, the Programme Director may exceptionally permit students to substitute suitable

alternative modules (usually from the MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care), subject to the Intended Learning Outcomes of the programme being satisfied.

Part-time MA

When taken part-time the four taught modules are completed in the first year, with the dissertation being completed in the second year. At the discretion of the Programme Director, students may exceptionally be permitted to defer the third or fourth module to their second year. The part-time mode of study is designed to meet the needs of healthcare practitioners and others who wish to combine study for the MA with full-time employment. The part time programme requires only 12 days attendance in year 1 and one day (a Research Methods study day in October) in year 2. Many second year students find it useful to come to Keele more frequently, to meet their supervisors, attend talks by visiting speakers, and use other university facilities. Others, especially those who live some distance away, prefer to keep in touch via email or phone, or use a combination of methods.

Full-time MA

The full-time MA is completed in one year. Students begin work on the dissertation alongside the taught modules and submit it at the start of September.

MA by modular study

Students taking the MA by modular study may take one or more taught modules per year for a period of up to four years, followed by the dissertation in the subsequent year. (Maximum five years in total.) The Semester 1 modules must normally be completed before the Semester 2 modules.

Intercalated MA

Medical students can opt to take a year out of their undergraduate studies in order to study a subject area in greater depth, before returning to complete their medical degree. Intercalating students take the full-time MA in Medical Ethics and Law to ensure that the course is completed within one year.

Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate

Some students may not want to do the entire MA Programme or may be prevented by personal circumstances from progressing to year 2 of the part time course. These students may exit the programme after completing the taught modules. Successful completion of all four taught modules (120 credits) leads to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Ethics and Law; while successful completion any two taught modules (60 credits) leads to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Ethics and Law. Credits cannot be awarded for the dissertation if the four taught modules are not successfully completed.

Learning Outcomes	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Learning Outcome) used
Describe, analyse and evaluate important theories and arguments in applied ethics and/or law, and of their relevance to healthcare practice and policy	Taught modules, dissertation	Essays (5,000 words), dissertation (15-20,000 words)
Describe, analyse and evaluate selected key arguments and issues in healthcare ethics and/or law	Taught modules, dissertation	Essays (5,000 words), dissertation (15-20,000 words)
Critically evaluate complex ethical and legal texts, including contemporary research-based materials, and primary legal materials (e.g. cases and statutes)	Taught modules, dissertation	Essays (5,000 words), dissertation (15-20,000 words)
Apply ethical and/or legal theories and arguments to practical problems in healthcare practice and policy, construct ethical and/or legal arguments in written form and defend those arguments against criticism	Taught modules, dissertation	Essays (5,000 words), dissertation (15-20,000 words)
Conduct a detailed and systematic investigation of an ethical and/or legal problem and reach conclusions based on sound argument and understanding of relevant research-based literature	Taught modules, dissertation	Essays (5,000 words), dissertation (15-20,000 words)

4. How is the Programme assessed?

Each of the four taught modules is assessed through a 5,000-word essay. The essay question is chosen from a list reflecting the main themes of the module, enabling students to focus on the issues that are most interesting to them or relevant to their work. For each essay, students have the opportunity to submit a plan on which written comments will be provided by a member of the teaching team. In addition, students receive written feedback on each of their essays,

aimed at helping them to improve their performance as they progress through the programme, and have the opportunity to discuss the feedback with their supervisor.

The dissertation gives students a chance to undertake a more extended piece of work (between 15,000 and 20,000 words) on an approved topic of their choice in any area of medical ethics and/or law. Students are not permitted to undertake primary empirical research involving human subjects as part of this programme. Students are supported by a supervisor who will provide feedback on a plan and draft chapters and offer general advice on researching and writing the dissertation.

5. What are the typical admission requirements for the programme?

The MA in Medical Ethics and Law is open to graduates with a first or second class honours degree (or foreign equivalent) in a relevant subject, or (exceptionally) appropriate professional qualifications and/or experience. Candidates undertaking the degree in Medical Ethics and Law may, under exceptional circumstances, apply for the Accreditation of Prior Learning. Applications should be made before commencing the course. The University's policy on this issue can be found via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/accreditationofpriorlearning/>. Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a qualification in English language, unless they hold a previous degree that was taught and examined in English. The minimum score for entry to the MA is academic IELTS 6.5 (with no subtest below 5.5) or equivalent.

6. How are students supported on the programme?

Each student is allocated a personal supervisor from the programme team, whose role is to assist students with academic and pastoral problems, to provide individual advice and discuss the written feedback that will be provided for each assignment, and to provide general academic advice and support. The supervisor is the 'first contact' for all academic matters and any personal problems; he or she is the student's most important source of information and advice, and is likely to be the person that they have most contact with at Keele. During the taught part of the course students normally meet with their supervisor during each of the teaching blocks. Contact is also maintained via email and telephone, and additional meetings can be arranged as appropriate. During the dissertation stage the supervisor will provide advice and feedback on dissertation plans and draft chapters. The Programme Director is available to give advice if a student has a problem that cannot be resolved by the supervisor.

Students receive guidance during the first teaching block on how to identify, locate and use materials (including electronic resources) available in Keele University Library and elsewhere. A dedicated Law Librarian is available to assist students with access to these resources.

Guidelines are provided for the production of coursework assignments and dissertations and these are reinforced by assignment guidance and feedback sessions in each teaching block, the Research Methods study day at the start of the dissertation stage, and by individual supervisors.

Students whose first language is not English are offered language classes, facilities and services by the University's Language Centre. Following diagnostic English language assessment, students may be required or recommended to take English language classes offered by the Language Centre. In addition to modules on English for academic study, students have access to one-to-one tutorials for individual help and advice, and to a wealth of resources for self-study and practice. Any student, international or otherwise, can request a 30 min 1-1 session if they need it. Students requiring English language support (on testing) will be allocated to one or two of the following modules:

- ENL-40001: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 1 - semester 1
- ENL-40004: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 1-B - semester 2
- ENL-40002: Academic English for Postgraduate Students 2 - semester 1 or 2

For students required to undertake these English Language modules, determination of progression to the dissertation module (*as outlined above*) will include an evaluation of the student's engagement and performance on the respective English Language modules.

Central university services available to all students including the counselling services, disability and dyslexia support, international student support and careers and employability can be contacted via the Student Support Centre at www.keele.ac.uk/ssds/. a dedicated law librarian, an international office, a student counselling service and a disability office. More information about these services is available in the university prospectus.

7. Learning Resources

The Keele Learning Environment (KLE)

This is an online resource that is used to host programme handbooks and guides, timetables, handouts and slides, and other materials, and for electronic submission of assignments and dissertations. It also provides discussion boards that

students can use to continue discussion and maintain contact, and as a forum for discussing the course, between teaching blocks.

Libraries and Electronic Resources

Keele University Library has many resources for your subject, both on campus and online. Further information about the library can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/library/>. Because many students on the MA in Medical Ethics and Law are based away from Keele, we endeavour, as far as possible, to recommend reading materials available in the library's e-journal and e-book collections, which can be accessed from off-campus using a Keele student username and password. The library also operates a postal lending service for a fee.

In addition to Keele's library, students can also make use of more than 170 libraries of other higher education institutions in the UK and Ireland via the SCONUL Access scheme.

Computer facilities

For information about IT Services please consult the IT Services website: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/it/>. IT Services is located in the Library building and is responsible for the computing infrastructure in the university and for the support of all staff and students undertaking academic computing tasks. There are a large number of 'open access' PCs available for students. All student PCs use a standard platform, which includes software such as Microsoft Office, web browsers, and other standard applications you may need. Printing facilities are available in the library building. You must ensure that you have read form CC.03, which is the Conditions of use of the Computer Facilities.

8. Other learning opportunities

Each year we run a series of lectures on Health Care Ethics and Law sponsored by the Royal Institute of Philosophy, in which speakers from other universities present aspects of their work for a public audience. Many of these are integrated into the teaching blocks of the MA Medical Ethics and Law, and all are open to our students.

Students are also welcome to attend events organised by the Research Centre for Law, Ethics and Society. These include talks by visiting speakers, and work-in-progress seminars at which members of the Centre present their current work.

From time to time the MA in Medical Ethics and Law features guest lectures by members of the law firm Mills & Reeve, which provide students with a practitioner perspective on aspects of Medical Law. Mills & Reeve also sponsors a prize for the best dissertation each year; in addition to a cash prize the winner is invited to have lunch with partners of the firm.

A non-assessed online module entitled 'A Rough Guide to Law for Non-Law Students' is available on the Keele Learning Environment to help students without a background in law to prepare for their first law teaching.

It is possible for students to register on a single module (modular programme of study) for Continuing Professional Development or other purposes. Students may choose to attend the module without completing the assessment but no credits would be awarded for this. Students should contact the postgraduate administrator (law.postgrad@keele.ac.uk) for further information.

9. Quality management and enhancement

The Programme Director, who oversees the programme team, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the programme. The Director, in turn, reports to the Head of School who has ultimate management responsibility for the Programme. The programme is further supported by the Taught Postgraduate Committee, which comprises representatives from each of the taught postgraduate programmes in the school and is chaired by the School Director of Postgraduate Studies.

To ensure that the MA in the Medical Ethics and Law maintains the highest possible standards, the programme employs the following procedures.

- Student evaluation of teaching. Students have the opportunity to evaluate each module and the overall programme. Data from the evaluations are circulated to staff and discussed in programme meetings and the CARD report.
- Peer observation of teaching. The academic staff responsible for delivering the programme undertake regular peer observation of teaching that is used to identify teaching strengths and areas of development.
- Student Academic Representatives (STARS). Stars are elected by students at the beginning of each year, represent students on the Staff Student Liaison Committee and act as a channel of communication between students and staff.
- Staff Student Liaison Committee. This provides a forum for student representatives from all postgraduate programmes in the School of Law to raise any issues that need to be brought to the School's attention.
- External Examiners. The MA in Medical Ethics and Law has one external examiner for each of its constituent disciplines. Their role is to ensure that assessment processes are fair and rigorous, and that standards are in line with national guidelines and comparable with other institutions.

- Annual Programme Review. The programme team meets to review student evaluations, student performance, external examiners' reports and to consider changes to the programme.
- Curriculum Annual Review and Development (CARD). The university's formal review process whereby the Programme Director reports on student evaluations, student performance, admissions and other data, and proposed changes to the programme.

10. The principles of programme design

Important principles of design for this programme include: (a) research-led teaching; (b) interactivity where practicable; (c) interdisciplinary (especially with respect to ethics, law, and medicine). In addition, the programme has been designed in relation to the following documents:

- Programme Specification Template Keele University, 2016-17.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, 2015, Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, including Chapter A2 (Reference Points for Academic Standards) and Chapter A3 (Setting Academic Standards and an Outcome-based approach to Academic Standards).
- Keele University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020

11. Programme Version History

Version History	Date	CHANGES / NOTES
Date first created	July 2012	
Revision history	20 May 2015	To incorporate updated Semester 1 modules.
	23 Nov 2016	Copied into new template. Revised information on English Language Support added in section 6.
	2 Jun 2017	Altered Learning Outcomes to comply with approved terminology.
Date approved	15 June 2017	SLTC
	31 Jan 2017	FLTC