

Juris Doctor/Master of Arts in Bioethics Dual Degree Program
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
School of Law
Wake Forest University

Goal and Rationale

The Wake Forest University School of Law and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences jointly offer a dual, three-and-a-half-year degree program, *Juris Doctor* and Master of Arts in Bioethics and (JD /MA). The program's objective is to facilitate an interdisciplinary and comparative study of law and bioethics and to encourage students whose academic or career interests require gaining competence in both disciplines. By allowing some law courses to count as electives toward the MA degree, as well as by allowing some graduate bioethics courses to count among the elective credits permitted within the JD curriculum, students are able to earn two advanced degrees in less time than it would take to earn the two degrees separately.

The rationale for the program is based on the premise that bioethics is becoming increasingly relevant to several areas of practice within the legal profession. These contemporary dynamics similarly make it necessary for scholars and practitioners of bioethics to appreciate how law operates to express and to change biomedical values. A dual degree program in bioethics and law signals the commitment of both the School of Law and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to interdisciplinary collaboration and learning.

Structure

The joint degree program will save students up to a semester plus a summer of enrollment by granting 12 hours of law credit for bioethics coursework, and granting 6 hours of bioethics credit for law coursework. It is anticipated that students accepted to the program will spend their first year full-time in the law school, and one extra semester full-time in the Bioethics program. They will complete 12 additional bioethics hours during their 2nd and 3rd years of law school. For most students, the full bioethics semester will come after the third year of law school, but it could come earlier. In either event, students may receive both degrees in as little as seven semesters rather than eight semesters plus a summer. Students will pay tuition and register with the law school for six semesters and with the bioethics program for one semester.

Application Process

Admission to the JD/MA program is a two-tiered process. Students interested in the program must first apply separately to the School of Law and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and be accepted for admission by both schools. These applications do not need to be simultaneous, but they should indicate their intent to be considered for the dual degree program on their respective applications to the Law School and the Graduate School. Alternatively, persons may submit a separate application to enroll in the dual degree program if already admitted to either School. In order to be considered eligible for admission, the JD/MA candidate must take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) test is optional, however, and will be waived on request. Final decision about admission to the program will be made by a joint committee of the JD/MA program. Students should consult the prospectuses of both schools for information about tuition and financial assistance.

Governance

The student in the MA/JD divides his/her time between the Law School and the Bioethics Program and benefits not only from an array of course offerings from both curricula, but also

from the social and general intellectual life of both academic programs. Every student in the joint program will be assigned a faculty advisor from each school with whom they are expected to meet regularly throughout the duration of the program. The student must receive the advisors' approval for course selection each semester.

If a student has not enrolled in the joint degree program from the beginning of the 3.5 year period, he/she will be assigned faculty advisors as soon as application has been made and accepted to the joint program.

List of Courses

See *the Law School Bulletin* for Law School courses. The list is also available on the school's website: <http://law.wfu.edu/academics/courses/>

See the *Graduate School Bulletin* for courses in the Bioethics Program, which is also available on the program's website: www.wfu.edu/bioethics

Faculty Representatives:

Mark Hall, Bioethics Program
Wilson Parker, School of Law