

Bioethics Department at SickKids – Studentships:

Student and Health Care Professionals’ Opportunities in Paediatric Bioethics

The Bioethics Department at SickKids welcomes requests from students and health care-affiliated individuals who wish to pursue a project in paediatric bioethics. (This document will use the term students for convenience but does not in any way exclude others, such as practising Health Care Professionals). The Department is able to accommodate 4-5 students each summer and 1-2 students over a more extended period throughout the year.

The primary criteria for selection are the specific project in paediatric bioethics that the student wishes to pursue, and the availability of a suitable supervisor from within the Bioethics Department. The project is envisaged as one that will result in a publishable paper and corresponding academic poster that can both be fully completed during the studentship.

Students need to be strong writers who, with Bioethicist mentorship, have a high likelihood of completing a paper of sufficient quality to be submitted for publication by the end of the studentship.

Academic background

We accept students from the traditional bioethics-feeder disciplines, including philosophy, medicine, nursing, social work, law and religious studies, and also from broader backgrounds including psychology, anthropology, the humanities, and health care policy.

Priority is given to students who have completed an undergraduate degree and who have excelled in Bioethics, philosophy, or health law classes.

Students currently in University programs may be able to receive credits from their university for this undertaking with the Bioethics Department.

Application process

Send an email to Randi Zlotnik Shaul – Director Bioethics Department randi.zlotnik-shaul@sickkids.ca with a copy of your CV and a letter describing:

- (1) why you are interested in a volunteer studentship with the Bioethics Department at SickKids
- (2) your background in Bioethics to date
- (3) topics in paediatric bioethics that you would be interested in researching and writing about during a studentship. Ideally topics would be ones about which you have already done some preliminary study.

Potential candidates will be contacted for an in-person or telephone interview with the Director and normally one other member of the Bioethics Department.

A writing sample and the names of two referees will be requested.

Departmental activities

Students spend most of their time in the Bioethics Department. This is to encourage interaction with faculty members and participation in ad hoc meetings and other educational or research activities. The more time a student spends in the Department, the more they are likely to complete a paper and corresponding academic poster, and the greater the range of additional experience that can be enjoyed.

The supervisor(s) work with the student to develop a paper for publication and an academic poster for display at a minimum of two scholarly forums, including SickKids Bioethics Week and the Joint Centre for Bioethics Research and Awards Day.

Students attend weekly Tuesday morning Bioethics staff meetings during which members of the Department review bioethics consultations and educational, policy and research activities they will be involved with that week. Students provide regular updates on their work at these and other sessions. A student may also attend one Research Ethics Board meeting and a research skills class for other SickKids summer students. Generally speaking, students will not accompany bioethicists to Bioethics consultations with patients, families and staff.

Students will be immersed in the academically rich and diverse community of practice at SickKids and at the Joint Centre for Bioethics (JCB) in Toronto. When appropriate, students may have the opportunity of meeting with experts in their field of interest, outside of the members of the Bioethics Department. This would be facilitated by the student's Bioethics supervisor. Students are encouraged to attend seminars and events relevant to their areas of interest at both SickKids and the JCB.

Unfortunately there is no financial remuneration available for studentships in the Bioethics Department. Thus these positions have to be categorized as voluntary. Studentship can be full or part-time as we recognize that many students will need income from employment elsewhere during this period. Summer students can commit to volunteer for 3-5 days per week and during the academic year students general commit to up to 5-10 hours per week. To maximize the quality of the Studentship experience, the majority of work will take place in the Bioethics Department – 525 University Avenue, 8th floor, suite 845. Students will need to fulfill SickKids requirements for hospital volunteers – vaccinations up to date, police check.

We aim to make the studentship as relevant and complementary as possible to the student's professional goals and objectives. If you think the opportunity sounds like a great fit for you, please contact Dr Randi Zlotnik Shaul at randi.zlotnik-shaul@sickkids.ca

For examples of previous student projects (page18) and other activities of the Department see the Biennial Report 2014/15.

<https://www.sickkids.ca/bioethics/72324-Biennial%20Report%20-%20Bioethics.pdf>