

Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For students starting in Academic Year 2024/25

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	MA Medical Ethics and Palliative Care
Award type	Taught Masters
Mode of study	Full-time Modular Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time Up to five years modular
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	n/a
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	<p>UK students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2024/25 is £9,800</p> <p>Part-time fee for 2024/25 is £6,900 for year 1 and £3,000 for year 2*</p> <p>International students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2024/25 is £19,500</p>

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

2. Overview of the Programme

Major advances in medical technology, increased expectations, and changing moral attitudes have combined to generate many complex ethical and legal problems in the fields related to palliative care. Individuals who care for patients with life-threatening illnesses can face particularly pressing and difficult moral choices. The programme provides an opportunity to gain a deeper and more systematic understanding of these issues, and to explore the moral problems health care professionals working in these areas may face.

Applications are welcome from people with a professional or other serious interest in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care, 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, 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.

This programme is run by the School of Law at Keele University, which is one of England's longest established providers of postgraduate medical ethics and law education. The MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care remains the only programme of its kind in the UK specialising in palliative care and end of life medical ethics.

3. Aims of the programme

The principal purpose of this programme is to deepen students' understanding of healthcare ethics that are particularly relevant to the fields related to palliative care, and to enhance their ability to think systematically about the moral issues that healthcare professionals may face in the course of their work in this area. It can also provide a foundation for pursuing further study (for example, at doctoral level) for those interested in doing so.

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Provide students with a high quality education in medical ethics and law with a specialist focus on the ethics of palliative care;
- 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 in palliative care.

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of important theories and arguments in applied ethics and/or law, and of their relevance to healthcare practice and policy, with a focus on palliative care.
- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of selected key arguments and issues in medical ethics with a focus on palliative care;
- Demonstrate the ability to understand and critically evaluate complex ethical and medical legal texts, including contemporary research-based materials (e.g. cases and statutes);

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to apply ethical and legal theories and arguments to practical problems in healthcare practice and policy in palliative care, to construct ethical or legal arguments in written form and to defend those arguments against criticism;

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to conduct a detailed and systematic investigation of an ethical problem and/or legal problem and to reach conclusions based on sound argument and understanding of relevant research-based literature.

The Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and

societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical awareness**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

The MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care involves both taught sessions and a chance for students to write a dissertation on a topic of their choosing related to the programme. Teaching occurs in four three-day blocks (one teaching block per module) that run between September and May. This innovative structure has proved particularly popular with health care professionals in full-time employment as it allows students to combine study with full time work, and 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 teaching 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 programme. Part 2 is the MA dissertation component.

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

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 the field of health care and 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 programme.

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. Part 2 also includes two study days at which students are provided with training on how to research and write the dissertation, and have opportunities to discuss their plans and work in progress with the programme team and their peers.

6. Teaching Staff

The programme team consists of ethics and law lecturers from the School of Law at Keele University. From time to time, external expert speakers may also be invited to speak on the programme. Many members of the teaching team have extensive experience of teaching postgraduate medical ethics courses. We 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.

Members of the teaching staff include specialists in ethics and medical law within the School of Law. Individual staff biographies can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/law/people/>

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

The MA programme consists of four 30-credit taught modules and a 60-credit dissertation. These may be taken by part-time, full-time or modular study.

All modules are compulsory for the MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care (total: 180 credits). However, the Programme Director may exceptionally permit students to substitute suitable alternative modules to those listed in this document, subject to the Intended Learning Outcomes of the programme being satisfied. The first two modules (ETH-40044 and ETH-40045) are shared with the MA in Medical Ethics and Law as these provide important groundwork in medical ethics and medical law.

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 13 days attendance in year 1 and two day (a Research Methods study day in Semester 1 and a Presentation Day in Semester 2) 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, phone or video call, 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 (a maximum five years in total). The Semester 1 modules must normally be completed before the Semester 2 modules.

Intercalated MA

Medical students are sometimes allowed 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 Palliative Care to ensure that the programme is completed within one year.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 7	180	0	0

Module Lists

Level 7

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Moral Theory and Medical Ethics	ETH-40044	30	Semester 1
Principles of Medical Law	ETH-40045	30	Semester 1
Medical Ethics and Law Dissertation	ETH-40041	60	Semester 1-3
Policy, Resource and Research Ethics in Palliative Care	ETH-40036	30	Semester 2
Life, Death and the Human Body	ETH-40040	30	Semester 2

Level 7 Module Rules

ETH-40044 and ETH-40045 must normally be taken before ETH-40040 and ETH-40036. Exceptionally, the Programme Director may waive this requirement where a student has previously studied medical ethics and/or law at an appropriate level.

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Level 7

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
An understanding of important theories and arguments in applied ethics and/or law, and of their relevance to healthcare practice and policy in palliative care	Taught modules, dissertation
A detailed knowledge and understanding of selected key arguments and issues in medical ethics with a focus on palliative care	Taught modules, dissertation
The ability to understand and critically evaluate complex ethical and legal texts, including contemporary research-based materials, and primary legal materials (e.g. cases and statutes).	Taught modules, dissertation

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
The ability to apply ethical and/or legal theories and arguments to practical problems in healthcare practice and policy in palliative care, to construct ethical or legal arguments in written form, and to defend those arguments against criticism	Taught modules, dissertation

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
The ability to conduct a detailed and systematic investigation of an ethical and/or legal problem and to reach conclusions based on sound argument and understanding of relevant research-based literature.	Taught modules, dissertation

8. Final and intermediate awards

MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care	180 credits	The successful completion of the Dissertation (60 Credits) in addition to the 4 taught modules (120 credits). Credits cannot be awarded for the dissertation if all of the four taught modules are not successfully completed.
Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care	120 credits	Successful completion of all four taught modules (120 credits)
Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care	60 credits	Successful completion of any two taught modules (60 credits)

9. How is the Programme Assessed?

Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance.

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 Academic Mentor.

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 relevant to palliative care. 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 chapter and offer general advice on researching and writing the dissertation.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also receive feedback on formative work (essay and dissertation plans, draft dissertation chapter) to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

10. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/>

The MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care and its PGCert pathway in Ethics in Palliative Care is open to graduates with a first or second class honours degree (or international equivalent) in a relevant subject, or appropriate professional qualifications and/or experience.

Candidates undertaking the degree in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care may, under exceptional circumstances, apply for the Recognition of Prior Learning. Applications should be made before commencing the programme.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/ga/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

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.

13. How are students supported on the programme?

Each student is allocated an Academic Mentor from the programme team, whose role is to help students to reflect on their progress through the course, including reflection on the written feedback that will be provided for each assignment, and to provide general academic advice and support. The Academic Mentor is the 'first contact' for all academic matters and can direct students to more specialist support services; 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 programme students normally meet with their supervisor during each of the teaching blocks. Contact is also maintained via electronic tools, 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 Academic Mentor or 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 Academic Mentors and dissertation 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 will include an evaluation of the student's engagement and performance on the respective English Language modules.

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 Student Services at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/student-services/>.

14. Learning Resources

The Keele Learning Environment (KLE)

This is an online resource that is used to host programme and university resources 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 programme, between teaching blocks.

Microsoft Teams

This online platform is used as the primary repository for programme handbooks and guides, timetables, handouts, slides, and other course materials. It is also used for announcements, video calls, and text-based discussion to allow conversations between staff and students to continue 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: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/>. Because many students on the MA in Medical Ethics and Palliative Care 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.

You can access the various materials available on-line using the recommended username and password. Details on these are available from the Library website at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/library/support/access>.

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 the Conditions of use of the Computer Facilities.

15. Other Learning Opportunities

There is an active research community within the School of Law and postgraduate students are invited to participate in the wide range of seminars and other research activities, such as workshops and academic conferences held at Keele. There are also other lectures and research seminars organised in Schools and Research Institutes within the University that may be of interest to you. You will be informed of these via your Keele email address.

16. Additional Costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

18. The principles of programme design

Important principles of design for this programme include: (a) research-led teaching; (b) interactivity where practicable; (c) interdisciplinarity (especially with respect to ethics, law, and medicine).

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 11 June 2024

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2023/24	JONATHAN HUGHES	18 April 2023	
1	2022/23	SOTIRIOS SANTATZOGLOU	09 August 2022	