

Criteria for evaluating post-doctoral candidates from outside the US

The Department gets over 100 applicants every year for about 3 positions for post-doctoral fellowships. The selection process is therefore very competitive. We do accept fellows both from within the USA and from outside the USA. We primarily look for academic excellence and promise of excellence in research in bioethics. In that regard, the following points are important.

1. It is preferable if the writing sample is single-authored and shows evidence of analytical ability. It should be on a topic related to bioethics. The paper does not have to address a bioethics topic directly, but should ideally have some relevance, such as topics in ethical theory, health policy, history of medicine, literature and medicine, sociology of medicine etc. A paper on a basic science topic, especially if the applicant is not first author, is usually not sufficient evidence of analytical ability. A scientific paper that addresses methodological issues or that contains extensive discussion about foundational issues may, however, provide sufficient evidence of the analytical ability of the applicant. The writing sample does not need to be published.
2. Letters of recommendation should give details about the type and quality of the academic work the applicant has done and the future potential for scholarship.

For applicants from outside North America and Western Europe in particular we also look for career prospects in bioethics in their home institutions and home countries. We look for the following indicators.

1. The applicant is likely to return to positions where they can use the skills obtained during the fellowship training.
2. There is some institutional support for the application, such as evidence of possibility of returning to a position where expertise will be utilized, or a letter by Department Chair or Dean stating willingness to introduce a relevant teaching program for the skills obtained in the Fellowship program.
3. There is evidence of commitment to bioethics in their home institutions, such as established ethics committees, teaching programs in professional schools such as medicine or nursing, or degree programs in bioethics.