

Training of Secretariat

Bioethics training

The members of the committee, particularly the Secretariat, can be registered as candidates for the European Master in Bioethics; the program provided Erasmus Mundus fellowship for non-European participants (see: <http://masterbioethics.org>).

In-residence training

A programme of internships or practical stages is in the process of being developed in cooperation with experienced national bioethics committees

*** *The Ethics Committee System in Denmark***

In collaboration with Novo Nordisk two meetings (February 27 and 2 June 2008) have been organized with the Danish ethics committee system to discuss the possibilities of supporting a program of internships or practical stages for secretaries of newly established NBCs. The outcome is that the secretariat serving four research ethics committees in the region of Copenhagen will be able to provide such support on the condition of UNESCO preparing a detailed program for such internships or practical stages (in terms of learning objectives, supervision needed and follow-ups) and on the condition of external funding being identified. The pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk has expressed their willingness to assist UNESCO in funding the project.

Internships/practical stages for secretaries of newly established National Bioethics Committees

Background

Experience from long lasting National (Bio) Ethics Committees has made it clear that a well-functioning secretariat is of crucial importance for the sustainability of a committee. For this reason UNESCO, within the context of the project ABC (Assisting Bioethics Committees) have started discussions with several experienced ethics committees about the possibility of the secretariats of these committees providing practical stages for secretaries of newly established National Bioethics Committees.

Overarching objective

- study the logistics, working methods and procedures of a committee secretariat

Specific objectives

- study the infra structure of a well-functioning secretariat
 - archives
 - library
 - technical facilities
- observe the preparations of a committee meeting
 - preparation of minutes from the previous meeting
 - preparation of a meeting agenda
 - distribution of minutes, meeting agenda and other relevant material to the committee members
 - identification of relevant materials in the bioethics literature
 - the role of ad hoc meetings with the chair of the committee in advance of committee meetings
- participate as observer in at least one committee meeting
 - observe ways of deliberating about ethical issues
 - observe ways of coping with disagreement between committee members
 - observe procedures of decision making
 - observe preparations of reports on particular topics
 - observe preparations of recommendations
- observe the follow-up of committee meetings
 - preparation of minutes from the meeting
 - follow-up of committee decisions
 - preparation of reports on particular topics

- preparation of recommendations to researchers, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders
- observe the planning, preparation, organization and follow-up of events of public debate and awareness raising

Responsibility of host institutions

- assisting the visitors in finding appropriate accommodation
- providing appropriate study conditions for the visitors
- assisting the visitors in fulfilling their objectives

Responsibility of visitors

- comply with any rules of confidentiality of the host institution
- provide a study report about the objectives achieved and lessons learnt to be addressed to UNESCO, the host institution and the NBC at which the visitor works

Responsibility of UNESO

- provide extra budgetary funding for the practical stages (travel, accommodation and meals)
- assist host institutions in selecting visitors
- integrate the practical stages program into the ABC project
- evaluate the experience with practical stages after a pilot phase of 3-5 years

Duration of practical stages

6 weeks