

Junior Professional Officers (JPO) Programme

Terms of Reference

GENERAL INFORMATION

Title:	Junior Professional Officer – Bioethics, Ethics of Science and Technology, and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence
Organizational Unit:	Social and Human Sciences Sector, Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section (SHS/BIO)
Duty Station:	Paris, France

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since its involvement in promoting international reflection on the ethics of life sciences in the 1970s, UNESCO continues to build and reinforce linkages among ethicists, scientists, policy-makers, judges, journalists, and civil society to assist Member States in enacting sound and reasoned policies on ethical issues in science and technology.

Within the frameworks of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (C/4), the approved Programme and Budget (C/5), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology Section performs the major functions of laboratory of ideas, standard-setter, clearing house, capacity-builder, and catalyst for international cooperation. Detailed information about the Section's work under these functions is available at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/ethics-science-and-technology>

Ongoing Workstreams

The Section, including through the work of its advisory bodies, is currently addressing a number of topics such as: ethics of gene editing; ethics of neurotechnologies; ethical issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic; ethical implications of the Internet of Things; climate change ethics; land use ethics; and ethics of artificial intelligence. A major ongoing workstream for the Section is on the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI), a draft text of which will be presented to the UNESCO General Conference for possible adoption at the end of 2021. As such, for 2021, the focus will be on the intergovernmental process and negotiation on the draft text of the Recommendation. It is envisaged that the Recommendation once adopted and to be effective, would need to be accompanied by strong policy and capacity building support in its implementation and transformation into legal frameworks, and AI specific practices in the public and private sector. The Recommendation will also provide a solid foundation for the entire UN system in its collective response to the ethical challenges posed by AI technologies in various fields, with UNESCO playing a leading role in this area.

SUPERVISION

Direct supervision by: Dafna Feinholz, Chief of Bioethics and Ethics of Science

The JPO will be working under the overall authority of the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences (ADG/SHS), with guidance from the Director of Partnerships and

Outreach and Director of Policies and Programmes, and under the direct supervision of the Chief of the Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Within this context, the JPO will be responsible for:

- Assisting with thematic and situational analysis on the ethics of artificial intelligence, as well as on other emerging issues in bioethics and ethics of science and technology;
- Assisting with drafting of reports, programmatic and funding proposals, and communication materials for the Section's workstreams, especially as related to the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI; and assisting with analysis and evaluation of implementation and delivery of these programmes/projects;
- Assisting with capacity building efforts in ethics of artificial intelligence, bioethics, and ethics of science and technology, including development of tools, mechanisms and networks outlined in the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI once adopted, as well as ongoing work to consolidate existing capacity building tools and to explore the next generation of tools that will be needed for impact;
- Assisting with the work of the secretariat of the advisory and statutory bodies under the responsibility of the Section (the International Bioethics Committee, the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee, and the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology), as well as the secretariat of the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics (UNIACB);
- Assisting with the preparation of interventions in public fora, such as conferences, panels and others;
- Participating in the meetings of the Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section, the Focal Points Working Group on the Ethics of AI, and the UNESCO AI Task Team as necessary, including providing updates on the progress of the work done;
- Assisting with the analysis and compilation of background data for potential partnerships and fundraising events and opportunities; and providing backstopping in support of collaborative activities for colleagues at Headquarters, in the Field and Institutes.
- Assisting with the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Section's workstreams, as well as other activities of the Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section as necessary.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education: Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in artificial intelligence or other relevant technological field, bioethics, ethics of science and technology, society and technology, law, social and human sciences, political science or related field. A first-level university degree in combination with additional two years of relevant experience may be accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree.

Work experience:

- Preferably a minimum of 3 years of professional experience in one or more of the following: ethics, social and human sciences, human rights, law, political science, science and technology, life sciences, international relations, or related areas.
- Good understanding of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, or the broader AI ecosystem (i.e. Internet of Things, big data, etc.), and related ethical, legal and social implications;
- Experience in project and/or programme management desirable, preferably at the international level.

Competencies and skills:

- Excellent analytical and drafting skills;
- Excellent communication skills (written and oral) and able to exchange information on complex issues;
- Strong problem solving skills;
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships in multicultural environment with external and internal partners;
- Excellent organization and planning skills, including the ability to organize own work priorities and deadlines. Discretion and maturity of judgement are required;
- Ability to work under pressure;
- Solid computer skills including advanced knowledge of office software such as Word and Excel.

Languages: Excellent knowledge (written and oral) of English; working knowledge of French will be an asset.

LEARNING ELEMENTS

- Acquire in-depth knowledge about and experience with UNESCO's work on the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.
- Acquire knowledge about and experience with the intergovernmental process through the elaboration of the Recommendation on the Ethics of AI.
- Acquire in-depth knowledge about and experience with the functioning UNESCO's advisory and statutory bodies on bioethics and ethics of science and technology (IBC, IGBC and COMEST), including the process for organizing its work and meetings.
- Acquire knowledge about and experience with the functioning of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics (UNIACB), including the process for organizing its work and meetings.
- Acquire knowledge about and experience with UNESCO's institutional and professional capacity building activities in the area of bioethics and ethics of science and technology.
- Gain familiarity with UNESCO's normative instruments in the field of bioethics and ethics of science and technology.
- Learn about the ethical implications and challenges related to scientific progress and new technologies, in particular on artificial intelligence and gene editing; learn about the global perspective on these ethical implications.
- Acquire knowledge about the functioning and mandate of UNESCO in general.

HR Appendix 19 A

Annex II

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