

2025 - 2026 Student Handbook

Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences MS in Genetic Counseling Program



UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC SCIENCES
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GENETIC COUNSELING
2025-2026 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK



08/14/2025

Jessica Denton, MS, CGC, PhD
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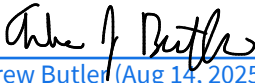
Date



08/14/2025

Floyd Josephat, PhD
Interim Department Chair

Date



[Andrew Butler \(Aug 14, 2025 13:22:15 CDT\)](#)

08/14/2025

Andrew Butler, PhD
Dean, School of Health Professions

Date

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INTRODUCTION

DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions!

We are one of the six schools comprising the renowned UAB Academic Health Center. We offer more than 30 programs and 40 offerings at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. And we are home to nearly 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

I encourage you to take advantage of all our vast resources, state-of-the-art facilities and research opportunities during your academic and clinical education. Also, please make the most of your access to the world-class faculty who are here to teach and support your journey.

Our degrees and programs are fully accredited by their respective professional organizations. This means you will be eligible for licensure, national certification or registrations upon graduation. Graduating from the School of Health Professions means you will be well prepared to make a difference in your community.

I look forward to seeing you grow in your respective fields and watching you become the leader we know you can be.



Andrew J. Butler, PhD, FAPTA

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The UAB School of Health Professions (SHP) is one of the largest academic institutions of its type in the United States. What began in the 1950s as a collection of training programs in various para-professional disciplines has grown into an internationally recognized center of academic and research excellence.

Today, we have five academic departments – Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy – that are housed in four buildings: Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences (WEBB), Learning Resource Center (LRC), the School of Health Professions (SHPB), and the Center for Biophysical Sciences and Engineering (CBSE).

We are proud of many accomplishments including:

- *U.S. News & World Report* ranks all eligible SHP programs in the nation's top 25.
- Research funding is at an all-time high of \$26+ million and growing.
- Nearly 10 of our programs you will only find in Alabama at UAB.
- Our school has never been stronger or better positioned as a national leader in health professions education. And this status will only grow stronger as we continue to welcome students like you.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is an overview of general academic regulations specific to SOHP programs at UAB. Although UAB will make its best efforts to abide by this handbook, UAB reserves the right to interpret and apply its procedures and policies, and to deviate from these guidelines, as appropriate in the particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of the program. UAB also reserves the right to address issues not covered in this handbook and to make changes to the policy without advance notice. Changes become effective at the time the proper authorities determine so and the changes apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. Please refer to our website for the most up-to-date version.

All students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the general University rules and regulations pertaining to graduate study at UAB and the specific academic requirements of their particular degree program. This Handbook is not intended to nor does it contain all policies or regulations applicable to students. Each student is responsible for familiarizing him/herself with the contents of this Handbook. Although the policies contained herein are intended to reflect current rules and policies of the University, users are cautioned that changes or additions may have become effective since the publication of this material. In the event of a conflict, current statements of Board policy contained in the Bylaws, Rules, official minutes, and other pronouncements of the Board or Chancellor, or superseding law, shall prevail.

This Handbook does not constitute a contract and may not be deemed or construed as part of any contract between UAB and any student or student representative.

SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

All dates related to registration, payments of tuition and fees, drop/add dates, other administrative requirements, and official school holidays are recorded on the [UAB Academic Calendar](#).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

The University established a new Academic Integrity Code effective August 23, 2021. This Code, which applies to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as well as all academic activities, defines academic misconduct and outlines procedures for breaches of the code. Policies are established for resolution of charges of academic misconduct, and these processes are managed by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC). In the School of Health Professions, the AIC is the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, the office is located in SHPB 660. The full text of the Academic Integrity Code is available at: [Academic Integrity Code](#).

ADVISING

Undergraduate student advising is provided through advisors assigned to each program as well as through the Office of Student Services. Advisor and recruiter contact information can be found on the [Office of Student Services Website](#). Graduate student advising is provided through the SHP graduate programs.

AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors help to spread awareness of the School of Health Professions and its multifaceted undergraduate and graduate programs, serve as liaisons between the department and university-wide student organizations, and serve as a student voice in school and university committees. The SHP Ambassadors help to support the programs within the school that will impact recruitment and retention initiatives. Learn more about the SHP Ambassadors [HERE](#).

ASKIT

AskIT is the technology help desk for faculty, staff, and students. They provide free support via telephone, email, or in-person. You will be asked to supply your BlazerID when you request assistance.

Phone: (205) 996-5555 Email: askit@uab.edu Website: https://uabprod.service-now.com/service_portal

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is expected in all SHP programs. Specific class, laboratory, or clinical site attendance requirements may be more stringent than university guidelines. Refer to the program requirements in this handbook and in course syllabi for policies. The UAB attendance policy is as follows:

The University of Alabama at Birmingham recognizes that the academic success of individual students is related to their class attendance and participation. Each course instructor is responsible for establishing policies concerning class attendance and make-up opportunities. Any such policies, including points for

attendance and/or participation, penalties for absences, limits on excused absences, total allowable absences, etc., must be specified in the course syllabus provided to students at the beginning of the course term. Such policies are subject to departmental oversight and may not, by their specific prescriptions, negate or circumvent the accommodations provided below for excused absences.

The University regards certain absences as excused and in those instances requires that instructors provide a reasonable accommodation for the student who misses assignments, presentations, examinations, or other academic work of a substantive nature by virtue of these excused absences.

Examples include the following:

- Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for “a reasonable number of disability-related absences” provided students give their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the university in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
 - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
 - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students.
- Absences due to religious observances provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term.

In these instances, instructors must give students the opportunity to complete assignments in a way that corresponds as much as possible to the nature, scope, and format of the original. Options may include making up exams or other assignments, rescheduling student classroom presentations, or arranging for early or late submission of written assignments. The course make-up policy should be included in the syllabus.

BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL

BlazerID: All students receive a unique identifier, the BlazerID, established at: www.uab.edu/blazerid.

Your BlazerID is required for accessing BlazerNET and other campus resources. To activate one's BlazerID, select “Activate Accounts.”

BlazerNET is the official portal of the UAB information network and is accessible from any Internet-accessible computer, on- or off-campus. Access BlazerNET from UAB home page www.uab.edu then choose UAB Quicklinks.

Email: uab.edu UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based system. Students have 50 GB of email space and 25 GB of free file 1 TB storage. The UAB email is the official communication medium for courses, news, information, and announcements. Students should not forward their UAB account to a personal email account. UAB is not responsible for information not received by the student due to the ‘redirecting’ of a UAB account to another email server.

BLAZER EXPRESS

The UAB Blazer Express Transit System provides transportation throughout the UAB campus. With a valid UAB ID badge, students can enjoy fare-free bus transportation. All buses are ADA-accessible and can seat approximately 35 riders. For an updated schedule, route maps, and hours of operation please go to www.uab.edu/blazerexpress/.

BOOKSTORE

There is one bookstore located on the UAB campus, offering a wide variety of products and services to students, including online purchasing and shipping. The bookstore stocks UAB memorabilia and college wear in addition to all required textbooks and course material.

UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore

Location: 1400 University Blvd, Hill Student Center, Birmingham, AL. 35233

Hours: M – F 8:00am – 5:00pm | Sat 10:00am – 2:00pm | Sun Closed

Telephone: (205) 996-2665 Website: <https://uab.bncollege.com/shop/uab/home>

CAMPUS ONECARD

The UAB OneCard is the official university identification card. It is used for personal identification, for entry to campus events and the recreation center, for library checkout, and for other UAB services. It also serves as a declining balance card for the UAB meal plans and for Blazer Bucks accounts. Additional information is available at www.uab.edu/onecard.

CAMPUS MAP

UAB's campus map can be found at the following: www.uab.edu/map/

CAMPUS SAFETY

Campus safety procedures and resources can be accessed at <https://www.uab.edu/students/home/safety>.

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Canvas Learning Management System is the platform used for managing instructional materials online. Canvas course sites are accessed through BlazerNET or at www.uab.edu/elearning/canvas. Students should monitor their course sites routinely for communication from faculty and to manage course assignments.

CATALOG

The UAB Catalog is published annually and includes UAB's courses, policies, and curricula. Students can link to the Undergraduate or Graduate catalog at www.uab.edu/catalog.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

[Community Standards and Accountability](#) is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the university through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students' behavior to

ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. SARC delivers programs and services in order to promote student safety and success, the pursuit of knowledge, respect for self and others, global citizenship, personal accountability and integrity, and ethical development. More information can be found here: [UAB Student Advocacy, Rights & Conduct](#). The UAB student conduct code may be accessed online: [UAB Student Conduct Code](#).

COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services offers no cost, confidential counseling for UAB students related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, or spiritual concerns. Student Counseling Services is located in the Student Health and Wellness Center at 1714 9th Avenue South (3rd Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233. For more information, call (205) 934-5816 or <https://www.uab.edu/students/counseling/>.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Accessible Learning: UAB is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. If you are a student with a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and you require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services for information on accommodations, registration, and procedures. Requests for reasonable accommodations involve an interactive process and consist of a collaborative effort among the student, DSS, faculty, and staff. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Support Services, please call (205) 934-4205 or visit [Disability Support Services](#).

If you are a student registered with Disability Support Services, it is your responsibility to contact the course instructor to discuss the accommodations that may be necessary in each course. Students with disabilities must be registered with DSS and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving academic adjustments. Reasonable and timely notification of accommodations for the course is encouraged and provided to the course instructor so that the accommodations can be arranged.

EMERGENCIES

Report suspicious or threatening activity to the UAB Police Department immediately. Law officers are available 24 hours, seven days a week. Also, more than 300 emergency blue light telephones connected directly to the police dispatch are located throughout campus.

UAB Police: Dial 911 *from a campus phone*

or call: (205) 934-3535 | (205) 934-HELP (4357) | (205) 934-4434

Emergencies affecting campus are communicated via the following:

- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline: (205) 934-2165
- University home web page: www.uab.edu
- Webpage: www.uab.edu/emergency
- Announcements on BlazerNET
- Cell phone messages and SMS text – register for B-ALERT notices via <https://idm.uab.edu/ens/b-alert>

UAB EQUAL EMPLOYMENT/EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT:

UAB is an Equal Employment/Equal Educational Opportunity Institution dedicated to providing equal opportunities and equal access to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, disability, and veteran's status. As required by Title IX, UAB prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to UAB's Assistant Vice President and Senior Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX notice of nondiscrimination is located at uab.edu/titleix

FERPA TRAINING

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. Information about your rights and protection of your records is available at the following site: FERPA. If you have questions or concerns about FERPA issues, you may email FERPA@uab.edu. All SHP students are required to complete FERPA Training.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Counselors are available each day in the One Stop Student Services Office located in the Hill Student Center, 1400 University Blvd. Suite 103, Birmingham, AL 35233. If you have general questions, you can call the Office of Student Financial Aid at (205) 934-8223 or send an email to finaid@uab.edu. For additional financial aid information: [Cost & Aid](#).

FOOD SERVICES

Dining facilities available on campus closest to the SHP buildings include the Commons on the Green – located on the Campus Green, south of 9th Avenue and the Campus Recreation Center. For additional information about meal plans and campus dining facilities: [Student Dining](#).

GRADUATE SCHOOL

The UAB Graduate School offers doctoral programs, post-master's specialist programs, and master's level programs. Graduate programs in SHP are coordinated through the Graduate School and students must adhere to the Graduate School policies and procedures. Graduate School information for current students is available at [Graduate School](#). Policies and Procedures for the Graduate School can be located in the [Graduate School Catalog](#).

GRADUATION

All students must complete an application for degree six months prior to graduating and no later than the deadline in the academic calendar. The University holds commencement every semester. Check the commencement website for the most current information: [UAB Commencement](#).

HEALTH INSURANCE

To ensure that all students have adequate health care coverage, including ongoing primary and specialty care, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) requires all students to have major medical health insurance. Students can provide proof of their own private coverage or be enrolled in the Student

Health Insurance Plan. The plan is a 1-year commercial policy provided by United HealthCare and is re-negotiated annually. This policy is a comprehensive health insurance policy at an affordable cost that is specifically designed to meet the needs of UAB Students. If you are required to have insurance but have sufficient coverage on another plan and wish to opt out of the Student Health Insurance Plan, you are required to submit a waiver to Student Health Services at the beginning of every semester. More information including submitting a waiver can be found at this website: [Student Health Insurance Waivers](#).

HIPAA TRAINING

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) includes significant requirements for protecting individual privacy of health information. All students in the School of Health Professions must complete an online tutorial and be tested on HIPAA regulations at the time of program admission. A BlazerID is required to access the training site, located at [online learning](#). Compliance with the training requirement is monitored monthly.

HONOR SOCIETIES

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the Alpha Eta Honor Society.

- The UAB Chapter of this Society recognizes students registered in the final term of a baccalaureate or graduate health professions program. Inductees must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) and be in the upper 10% of their program. Nominations are made by program directors in spring and summer terms.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty, and staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), first-time entering students, international students and scholars, and students in clinical & non-clinical programs, must provide proof of immunization against certain diseases: [Student Immunizations](#) unless they have an approved medical or religious exemption.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB)

Student researchers must comply with all requirements for protection of human subjects. Detailed information is available on the [IRB website](#).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual property refers to an asset that originated conceptually, such as literary and artistic works, inventions, or other creative works. These assets should be protected and used only as the creator intends. Training materials defining inventor status, patent criteria, and other intellectual property issues are available at: [University Policies on Patents, Copyright, and Intellectual Property](#).

LACTATION CENTERS

The University has provided several lactation centers for students, faculty, and staff across the campus. [Center locations](#). The School of Health Professions' lactation room is in the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building at 1675 University Blvd, Room 219A, Birmingham, AL 35233. Lactating students enrolled in the School of Health Professions have access to the room via their student ID/OneCard. If you cannot access the room, contact the building administrator, Julia Tolbert-Jackson at (205) 934-4133.

LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

UAB's libraries house excellent collections of books, periodicals, microforms, and other media. Students have online remote access to catalogs and online collections. Computers are available for student use during regular hours of operation. [UAB Libraries](#).

SHP Learning Resource Center (LRC)

The School of Health Professions Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides a unique set of enterprise solutions that promote an exciting, intriguing, and innovative learning environment. It provides a state-of-the-art media studio; audio/visual support; and information technology management of public, classroom, and testing labs.

Location: 1714 9th Avenue South (2nd Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233.

Phone: (205) 934-5146

Email: shplrc@uab.edu

Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences

This is the largest biomedical library in Alabama, and one of the largest in the south. Located across the crosswalk from the School, the LHL has extension libraries in University Hospital and The Kirklin Clinic. Dedicated librarians hold "office hours" in the Learning Resource Center weekly.

Location: 1700 University Blvd. Birmingham, AL. 35233

Website: <https://library.uab.edu/locations/lister-hill>

Phone: (205) 975-4821

Mervyn H. Sterne Library

A collection of more than one million items supporting teaching and research in the arts and humanities, business, education, engineering, natural sciences and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences.

Location: 917 13th Street South, Birmingham, AL. 35233

Website: <https://library.uab.edu/locations/sterne>

Phone: (205) 934-6364 (Reference) | (205) 934-4338 (User Services)

UAB STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This Code describes the standards of behavior for all students, and it outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations. Behavior that violates UAB standards of conduct listed within the Student Conduct Code and elsewhere will be subject to disciplinary action through the appropriate conduct process. Whether it is determined that an

individual or group is responsible for the violation(s), either by direct involvement or by condoning, encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

[Undergraduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

[Graduate Non-Academic Policies](#)

ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES

The mission of the One Stop is to provide a single point of professional integrated service to students. The One Stop serves students who need assistance with academic records, financial aid, registration, student accounting, ONE card, and other related topics. One Stop is located in the Hill Student Center, 1400 University Blvd. Suite 103, Birmingham, AL 35233. You may contact the [One Stop](#) office by phone or email at (205) 934-4300; (855) UAB-1STP [(855) 822-1787]; onestop@uab.edu.

PARKING

Student vehicles must be registered with UAB Parking and Transportation Services, located at 608 8th Street South, Birmingham AL. 35294. The office is open Monday – Friday from 7:30am – 5:00pm. Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student's account. For additional information: [UAB Student Parking](#).

PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN

Plagiarism is academic misconduct that will result in a grade of zero and may result in dismissal from the School of Health Professions and UAB (see Academic Integrity Policy). All papers submitted for grading in any SHP program may be reviewed using the online plagiarism monitoring software. Please note that all documents submitted to [Turnitin.com](#) are added to their database of papers that is used to screen future assignments for plagiarism.

RECREATION CENTER

The [Campus Recreation Center](#), located at 1501 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35233, is open to faculty, staff, students, and their families. A valid student identification card or membership card is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AWARDS

All students in the School of Health Professions are eligible for consideration for the following awards.

- Alfred W. Sangster Award for Outstanding International Student – This award is presented annually to an international student in recognition of their academic and non-academic achievements.
- Cecile Clardy Satterfield Award for Humanism in Health Care – This award is made annually to recognize one outstanding student for humanitarianism, professionalism, and commitment to health care.

- Charles Brooks Award for Creativity – This award is made annually in recognition of creative accomplishments such as written publications or artistic contributions which complemented the student’s academic activities.
- Dean’s Leadership and Service Award – Presented to a maximum of three outstanding SHP students annually, this award recognizes leadership to the School, UAB, and the community.

A call for nominations will be sent to program directors each year. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for awards available to students in individual programs.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

SHP has several scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in SHP programs. The Scholarship Committee, comprised of faculty from each department, reviews and selects awardees. Please go to [this website](#) for a list of scholarships and instructions for application.

Application announcements are made by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. Many programs in SHP also have scholarships available to currently enrolled students in those programs. Please refer to the program section of this handbook for more information.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SHARED VALUES

Collaboration | Compassion & Caring | Excellence & Achievement | Integrity | Respect | Service | Social Responsibility | Stewardship

The School of Health Professions is a tight-knit community that is connected from students to staff to faculty to alumni. We are dedicated to serving all from campus to community and beyond. And we are a knowledge-driven mass that is committed to classrooms, laboratories, clinics and more.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can serve as useful communication tools. However, health professions students should use the forums judiciously. For more information: [UAB Social Media Guidelines](#). The school’s official sites are the following:

- X: https://x.com/uab_shp
- Facebook: <https://facebook.com/uabshp>
- YouTube: <https://youtube.com/uabshp>
- Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/uabshp>
- LinkedIn: [UAB SHP LinkedIn](#)
- Instagram: https://instagram.com/uab_shp
http://instagram.com/uab_shp

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through Student Health Services (SHS) located at 1714 9th Avenue South (3rd Floor), Birmingham, AL. 35233. The clinic is open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday – Thursday; 9:00am – 5:00pm Friday. They are closed for lunch

between 12:00pm – 1:00 pm weekdays. For more information: [Student Health Services](#). Appointments may be scheduled by calling (205) 934-3580.

TITLE IX

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of gender in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on gender and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources, and supports, please visit the UAB Title IX webpage: <https://www.uab.edu/titleix/>.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees for the University are published annually under the “Students” tab of the UAB website. They may be paid through BlazerNET. SHP programs have specific fees attached to programs, courses, and/ or laboratories. For more information: [Tuition & Fees](#).

Payment deadlines for each semester are published on the official academic calendar. Please note that failure to meet payment deadlines can result in being administratively withdrawn from courses.

WEATHER

Severe weather situations that may affect the safety of students, faculty, and staff are communicated through the same channels as other emergencies. For more information: [Emergency Management](#).

Other information sources include:

- [B-ALERT System](#) (contact information must be setup and current)
- UAB Severe Weather & Emergency Hotline: (205) 934-2165

WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM

Withdrawal from a course or from your program is an official process and should be discussed with your academic advisor and / or program director. Most programs in the School of Health Professions are full-time and the curricula specifically sequenced. Withdrawal from a course may risk you having to wait to register for the class again. Withdrawals are made through the UAB registration system via the Student Resources tab in BlazerNET. Notice of program withdrawal should be given in writing to the program director. For more information: [UAB Add/Drop and Withdrawal Policy](#) including a medical withdrawal policy.

SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES

DISMISSAL OF STUDENT FOR FAILURE TO MAKE SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[Dismissal of Student and Appeal Process](#)

EMERGENCY PLAN – SHPB/LRC/WEBB

[SHPB/LRC/WEBB Emergency Plan](#)

BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

Students in SHP programs are required to undergo a background check and drug screen using the school's approved vendor, [CastleBranch](#), at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.). Additional checks/screens may be required by the individual sites therefore, students should work with the program to ensure compliance requirements are met. Instructions for requesting the background check and drug screens are provided to students by their programs. Students enrolled in SHP undergraduate programs will complete a learning module in the campus learning management system by the first semester of enrollment.

The Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs is responsible for ensuring student compliance throughout the program. Students found to be non-compliant will not be allowed to matriculate in the program (orientation, attend class, fieldwork placement, etc.) until all requirements are met. Program Directors, Fieldwork Coordinators, and students will be notified of non-compliance and a hold will be placed on the students' account.

- Fees for these screenings will be the responsibility of the student.
- The rules and regulations governing individual fieldwork placement sites may include additional provisions and/or more stringent guidelines which supersede this policy. Fees for these screenings are the responsibility of the student.
- Should your criminal background check contain issues, or if you fail a drug screen that may prevent you from receiving or sitting for board certification/licensure, a representative from the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs will contact you. Depending upon the outcome, students will have a registration hold placed on their account until in compliance and this may result in being dismissed from the program. See program's guidelines regarding specific consequences.

Programs requiring a criminal background check and drug screening by the end of the first semester of enrollment and again, prior to fieldwork placement (if applicable in the program requirements), are the following:

Administration Health Services, PhD
Biomedical Sciences to Biotechnology Fast Track
Biomedical Sciences to Clinical Laboratory Science Fast Track
Biomedical Sciences to Health Physics Fast Track
Biomedical Sciences to Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences Fast Track

Biomedical and Health Sciences, MS
 Biotechnology, MS
 Biotechnology, PhD
 Dietitian Education Program, Graduate Certificate
 Genetic Counseling, MS
 Health Administration (Residential), MSHA
 Health Care Management to Healthcare Quality and Safety Fast Track
 Health Care Management to Health Informatics Fast Track
 Health Care Management to Occupational Therapy Doctorate Fast Track
 Health Physics, MS
 Medical Laboratory Science, MS
 Nuclear Medicine & Molecular Imaging Sciences, MS
 Nutrition Sciences, MS

- Dietetic Internship Clinical Track
- Dietitian Education Program
- Research Track

 Nutrition Sciences, PhD
 Occupational Therapy, OTD – (entry level)
 Physical Therapy, DPT
 Physician Associate Studies, MSPAS
 Rehabilitation Science, PhD

The following students enrolled in SHP undergraduate programs will complete a learning module in the campus learning management system by the first semester of enrollment. If a fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum, residency, etc.) is required, students must complete criminal background checks and drug screens prior to the first day of the semester of a fieldwork placement.

Health Care Management, BS
 Biomedical Sciences, BS
 Biobehavioral Nutrition and Wellness, BS
 Disability Studies and Rehabilitation Science, BS

Programs waived from the Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening requirements are the following: *

Applied Mixed Methods Research, Graduate Certificate
 Biotechnology Regulatory Affairs, Graduate Certificate
 Clinical Informatics, Graduate Certificate
 Health Administration (International and Executive tracks), MSHA
 Health Informatics, MSHI
 Healthcare Finance Management, Graduate Certificate
 Healthcare Leadership, DSc
 Healthcare Leadership, Graduate Certificate
 Healthcare Quality and Safety, MS
 Healthcare Quality and Safety, Graduate Certificate
 Health Services Research, MS
 Healthcare Simulation, MS

Healthcare Simulation, Graduate Certificate

Nutrition for Community Health, Graduate Certificate

Nutrition Sciences, MS

- Clinical Track-Prior Learning

- Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track

Low Vision Rehabilitation, Graduate Certificate

Multi-Tiered Approach to Trauma, Graduate Certificate

Occupational Therapy Doctorate (Post Professional)

Physical Therapy Residencies (Neurologic, Orthopedic)

Primary Care Physical Therapy for Underserved Populations, Graduate Certificate

*Students enrolled in exempt programs who participate in a course(s) incorporating community, corporate or other high impact, out-of-classroom activities such as service learning, capstone projects or other hands-on learning experiences, may be required by placement sites to submit background check and drug screening results. Students are responsible for the fees associated with such screening.



STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

About CastleBranch.com

CastleBranch is a secure platform that allows you to order your background check & drug test online. Once you have placed your order, you may use your login to access additional features of CastleBranch, including document storage, portfolio builders and reference tools. CastleBranch also allows you to upload any additional documents required by your school.

Order Summary

Required Personal Information

- o In addition to entering your full name and date of birth, you will be asked for your Social Security Number, current address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Drug Test (LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics)

- o Within 24-48 hours after you place your order, the electronic chain of custody form e-chain will be placed directly into your CastleBranch account. This e-chain will explain where you need to go to complete your drug test.

Payment Information

- o At the end of the online order process, you will be prompted to enter your Visa or MasterCard information. Money orders are also accepted, but will result in a \$10 fee and additional turn-around-time.

Place Your Order

Go to: www.castlebranch.com and enter package code:

AH01 - Background Check and Drug Test

You will be required to enter your program under "Student Information" classification

You will then be directed to set up your CastleBranch profile account.

View Your Results

Your results will be posted directly to your CastleBranch profile account. You will be notified if there is any missing information needed in order to process your order. Although 95% of background check results are completed within 3-5 business days, some results may take longer. Your order will show as "In Process" until it has been completed in its entirety. Your school's administrator can also securely view your results online with their unique username and password. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Service Desk at 888.723.4263 x 7196 or visit the website to submit your question at: <https://www.castlebranch.com/contact-us>.

UAB POLICIES

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

[GRADUATE](#)

[UNDERGRADUATE](#)

HEALTH

[IMMUNIZATIONS](#)

[NEEDLE STICKS AND EXPOSURES](#)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

[EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT](#)

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

[CAMPUS SAFETY](#)

[FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND OTHER DANGEROUS WEAPONS](#)

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

[ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE](#)

[ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RESEARCH AND OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES](#)

[PATENT](#)

SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

[ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE AND CONSUMPTION](#)

[DRUG FREE CAMPUS](#)

[NON-SMOKING](#)

TECHNOLOGY

[TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES](#)

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

[UAB COMPLAINT POLICY](#)

SECTION 3 – PROGRAM INFORMATION

WELCOME

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham Genetic Counseling Training Program (UAB GCTP). This handbook has been compiled to provide you with an information source for the Master of Science Degree in Genetic Counseling. Where appropriate, the contact for more detailed information on various subjects has also been included. If you desire or need further explanation of any matter, or other types of information, please contact the Program Director. The campus directory and academic calendars are in the quick links tab of the main UAB homepage www.uab.edu.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

UAB, SHP, the GCTP, and the Department of Genetics (DOG) have common core missions to provide quality education, research, teaching, health care, and community service. These missions serve to support the program and its students and faculty in the development and implementation of a well-rounded program.

UAB Mission: UAB enriches society and improves health and well-being through transformational educational experiences, groundbreaking research, innovation and entrepreneurship, community engagement, and world-class patient care while serving our UAB, local and global communities.

UAB Vision: UAB is a world-class research university and academic health system committed to understanding and improving the human experience.

UAB Shared Values:

- **Collaborate:** Work as a team for the greater good.
- **Act with integrity:** Be accountable and always do the right thing.
- **Respect all:** Champion diversity and opportunities for all, with civility.
- **Excel:** Innovate and strive for excellence in everything we do.

SHP Mission: Improving the health and well-being of people everywhere through exceptional, collaborative, and innovative teaching, research, and service.

SHP Vision: To be recognized as a global leader in teaching, research, and service that develops new scientific knowledge, removes barriers and disparities, and develops leaders who help individuals, organizations, and communities to achieve their highest potential in a changing world.

SHP Values: Collaboration | Compassion & Caring | Excellence & Achievement | Integrity | Respect | Service | Social Responsibility | Stewardship

Genetic Counseling Program Mission: To provide a quality educational experience in genetic counseling to prepare students to be skilled health professionals who will equitably serve diverse individuals, families, and the greater community.

Genetic Counseling Program Vision: To foster an environment that enables learners to become forward thinking and compassionate genomics professionals within the organizations and communities they serve.

Genetic Counseling Program Shared Values:

- **Respect** - through treating others with high regard, integrity, and an appreciation of their lived experiences.
- **Collaboration** - through cultivating a supportive environment that engages and values the perspectives of peers, colleagues, patients, and the greater community.
- **Innovation** - through encouraging intellectual curiosity and critical thinking that improves the lives of others.

Genetic Counseling Program Objectives:

- Develop a deep understanding of genetic and genomic principles defined by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) Standards.
- Utilize critical thinking skills to provide genetic counseling services in diverse clinical settings.
- Effectively communicate information within the scope of genetic counseling to patients, providers, and the larger community.
- Engage in the research process through exploring the literature, developing research questions, seeking answers, and communicating findings.

Department of Genetics Mission: The Department of Genetics (DOG) is comprised of an interdisciplinary group of faculty focused on performing basic laboratory and clinical research, providing inpatient and outpatient consultation services and offering state-of-the-art genetic diagnostic testing.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham is a joint effort between the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (CDS) in the School of Health Professions (SHP) and the Department of Genetics (DOG) in the School of Medicine. A partnership has been established to meet the administrative and curriculum needs of the program to provide students with a quality education in genetic counseling. All aspects of the UAB GCTP, including didactic, clinical, and research components are designed for students to accomplish the [Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling \(ACGC\) Practice Based Competencies \(PBCs\)](#) and to meet the [ACGC Standards of Accreditation](#).

The Genetic Counseling Program leadership team facilitates all aspects of the genetic counseling program. The medical director provides clinical and genetic expertise to guide the development of the program as the field of genetics and genetic counseling continue to evolve. The program maintains four

committees to monitor the main components of the program: curriculum, clinical rotations, research, and student services. Committees consist of genetic counseling faculty and genetic counselors in clinical and non-clinical roles. The program leadership team meets annually with the program advisory board to review program outcomes and discuss program changes and developments discussed in committee meetings. The role of the advisory board is to guide the academic, clinical, and research directions of the program.

The program's curriculum utilizes numerous resources for genetics education on the UAB campus. The core components of the program include didactic education, clinical experiences, and a Plan II graduate level project. Students will complete 57 credit hours to obtain the degree. The coursework is presented in a variety of in person and online formats with the majority of the first-year didactic experience being in person and all second-year courses being delivered synchronously, online with some exceptions. Coursework includes topic-based lectures, problem-based learning, case studies, group discussion, student presentations, role-playing activities, service learning, and medical simulations. All coursework is supported online by the Canvas Learning Management System.

Student clinical experiences will be on the UAB medical campus, at the UAB-affiliated Children's Hospital of Alabama, and with the program's clinical training partner institutions. The program's current clinical partners are, the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville, AL, Ochsner Health in New Orleans, Louisiana, Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon, Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Kentucky, multiple sites in Memphis, Tennessee including Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and Baptist Memorial Hospital and multiple sites in Jacksonville, Florida including the Mayo Clinic, MD Anderson, and the University of Florida. Sites of clinical training are established at enrollment during the genetic counseling Match process and will be honored for the duration of training whenever possible. In some cases, adjustment of clinical tracks during student training may be necessary. UAB also has affiliation agreements with several additional institutions and can establish new affiliation agreements as needed. Students are encouraged to go off campus for their summer rotation, which is not part of the Match.

Students will have exposure to clinical care during their first year as part of their coursework. The first full rotation will be in the summer after the first year, and rotations will continue through both semesters of the second year. The program has established internal standards for specific case types and roles that each student will meet. These standards will include the minimum 50 participatory cases required by ACGC, as well as other clinical experiences that will prepare students for clinical practice and board certification through acquiring the ACGC PBCs.

Students will also complete a non-thesis graduate project (UAB's Plan II) that requires the student to gain insight into the techniques of problem posing and problem solving and to use these insights to prepare a written manuscript and professional poster related to the student project. The faculty will work with each student to identify appropriate project ideas and guide them to completion. Work on the graduate project begins in the first semester of year 1 with project topic selection and formation of a graduate project committee.

The standards of performance expected of students in the program is clarified below. These include specific expectations in didactic coursework, performance evaluations during clinical rotations, and overall expectations for professional behavior throughout the students' tenure in the program.

1. Students will comply with the requirements of the UAB Graduate School (students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.00).
2. Students will comply with the requirements of the program. Students must receive a grade of B or higher in all GC core classes (noted with a GC prefix), including clinical rotations.
3. Students must satisfactorily complete all the program's courses.
4. Students must satisfactorily complete the clinical portion of the curriculum.
5. Students must satisfactorily complete a Plan II graduate project.
6. Students must attend all mandatory supplemental activities as required by the program faculty.
7. Students are expected to behave in a professional and ethical manner that the program faculty consider necessary to function as competent and responsible genetic counselors. Students are expected to adhere to the [National Society of Genetic Counselors \(NSGC\) Code of Ethics](#).
8. Students are expected to comply with UAB's Student Conduct Code and Title IX Policy.
9. Students are expected to be responsive to feedback from program faculty and clinical supervisors.
10. Students are expected to have regular contact with the program faculty monitoring their academic activities and performance and discuss any difficulties that may interfere with their optimal performance or issues that could be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.
11. Students will meet individually on a regular basis with the program director and/or program leadership for advising to discuss current progress in their coursework, clinical rotations, graduate project, and professional goals.
12. During each of the clinical rotations, the student's progress and performance will be monitored and evaluated by the clinical supervisor. A student evaluation form will be completed at the end of the rotation. The student will also complete an evaluation of the rotation and their supervisor. The clinical supervisor will discuss the evaluation with the student. Both must be turned in before the student receives a grade for the rotation.

ACCREDITATION

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC).

The UAB GCTP received full accreditation from ACGC in 2013 and re-accreditation in 2019 for eight years, which is the maximum time allowed for programs. For more details regarding accreditation, please contact the ACGC.

ACGC Contact Information: 1660 International Drive, Suite 600, McLean, VA 22102 USA; **Phone:** [703.506.7667](tel:703.506.7667); **Email:** info@gceducation.org; **Website:** www.gceducation.org

ACGC PRACTICE BASED COMPETENCIES

The UAB GCTP has been developed in alignment with the ACGC Practice Based Competencies (PBCs). The Practice Based Competencies define and describe the seven competencies and 25 sub-competencies that an entry-level provider must demonstrate to successfully practice as a genetic counselor. These domains represent practice areas that define the activities of a genetic counselor.

The [ACGC PBCs](#) can be viewed in their entirety on the ACGC website and on the following pages. The bullets below each competency elaborate on skills necessary for achievement of the competency. These elaborations assist program faculty in curriculum planning and development, and assist the faculty when evaluating the program and students.

Genetics and Genomics Expertise

1. Apply knowledge of genetics and genomics principles, genetic conditions, and testing technologies to the practice of genetic counseling.
 - 1.a. Demonstrate knowledge of genetics and genomics principles and concepts.
 - 1.b. Apply knowledge of genetic conditions to the delivery of genetics services.
 - 1.c. Demonstrate knowledge of genetic testing methodologies and variant interpretation.

Risk Assessment

2. Evaluate personalized genetic risk.
 - 2.a. Analyze family history to estimate genetic risk.
 - 2.b. Calculate risk using probability methods and risk models.
 - 2.c. Integrate clinical and laboratory data into risk assessment.
 - 2.d. Order genetic tests guided by client-centered risk assessment.

Counseling

3. Promote integration of psychosocial needs and client-centered decision-making into genetic counseling interactions.
 - 3.a. Use applicable counseling skills and theories.
 - 3.b. Establish a working alliance with client.
 - 3.c. Promote psychosocial adaptation.
 - 3.d. Facilitate client's decision-making process.

Communication

4. Communicate genetics and genomics information to clients, colleagues, and other community partners.
 - 4.a. Tailor communication to specific individuals and audiences.

- 4.b. Use a variety of approaches to communicate genetics and genomic information.
- 4.c. Convey probabilities based on client's risk perception and numeracy.

Research

- 5. Synthesize the evidence base relevant to genetic counseling.
 - 5.a. Critically interpret data and literature.
 - 5.b. Apply data and literature considering its strengths, weaknesses, and limitations.
 - 5.c. Demonstrate knowledge of how genetic counselors engage and contribute to the research process.

Healthcare Systems

- 6. Demonstrate how genetic counselors fit within the larger healthcare system.
 - 6.a. Demonstrate how disparities, inequities, and systemic bias affect access to healthcare for diverse populations.
 - 6.b. Describe the financial considerations in the delivery of genetic services.
 - 6.c. Advocate for continuity of care.
 - 6.d. Collaborate with members of the Care Team, clients, and other Community Partners.

Professional Identity

- 7. Embody the values of the genetic counseling profession.
 - 7.a. Adhere to the genetic counselor scope of practice.
 - 7.b. Follow applicable professional ethical codes.
 - 7.c. Exhibit behaviors that promote an inclusive, just, equitable, and safe environment for all individuals and communities.
 - 7.d. Engage in self-reflective practice to promote ongoing growth and development.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS

To successfully complete the degree requirements for the curriculum for the Master of Science (M.S.) in Genetic Counseling Program, students must complete the academic and clinical practice requirements of the program in preparation to practice as an entry-level genetic counselor. Graduate training is a rigorous and intense training process that places specific requirements and demands on students.

The essential functions below extend beyond academic requirements for admission and are standards that all enrolled students must meet to successfully complete graduate training. The technical standards must be met by students with or without reasonable accommodations. The School of Health Professions is committed to the full and meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may contact UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) to request reasonable accommodations. Given the

clinical nature of this program, additional time may be needed to implement accommodations. Timely disclosure and requests by students are essential and encouraged.

All genetic counseling students must meet the following requirements:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with faculty, students, patients, and members of the health care team.
- Possess the capacity for critical thinking including the ability to assimilate, analyze, synthesize, and integrate concepts and to problem solve in a timely fashion.
- Possess the emotional health and psychological stability required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, prompt completion of all responsibilities and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the health care team.
- Adapt to changing environments and function effectively under stress.
- Students must be able to demonstrate proficiency of all ACGC Practice Based Competencies. ACGC Practice Based Competencies are available in the UAB GCP Student Handbook and online at [ACGC PBCs](#).

Technical Standards:

The student must possess sufficient cognitive skills to:

- Acquire, process, retain, and apply knowledge through a variety of instructional methods such as: written materials (i.e. texts, journals, documentation, and other written sources), oral delivery, visual demonstrations, research experiences, clinical experiences and independent learning.
- Complete reading assignments, search and analyze professional literature, and apply information gained to guide practice.
- Process (measure, calculate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate) large amounts of complex information; apply theoretical concepts to practice activities and perform clinical problem-solving in a logical and timely manner.
- Maintain attention for at least 3-4 hours; tolerate days when classes or clinical experiences may last 8-10 hours.
- Take and pass test/quizzes in a variety of formats.
- Apply knowledge and judgment required to demonstrate ethical reasoning and behavior.
- Comply with University, Program, and clinical or research site rules and regulations.
- Demonstrate judgment necessary to establish priorities and develop and use strategies.

The student must possess sufficient interpersonal skills, communication skills, and affective learning skills to:

- Demonstrate positive sufficient interpersonal skills including, but not limited to, cooperation, flexibility, tact, empathy, and confidence.

- Collaborate with classmates, clients and their family members and significant others, and additional members of office and medical team while on clinical rotations
- Function successfully in supervisory, and instructor-student relationships; change and adjust behavior and performance in the classroom or clinic on the basis of instructor feedback.
- Participate equitably in cooperative group learning activities; actively participate in class discussions and as a member of a team.
- Orally present information to groups of people with various educational backgrounds.
- Use language that is appropriate for the recipient. including with faculty, peers, clients, and other health professionals from different social and cultural backgrounds.
- Obtain information from clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and other professionals.
- Utilize the computer for communication and class assignments.

The student must possess sufficient professional behavior to:

- Demonstrate respect for individuals from different backgrounds and life experiences, including but not limited to, socio-cultural, socioeconomic, spiritual, and lifestyle choices.
- Exhibit professional demeanor including appropriate language and dress, acceptance of responsibility for conduct.
- Demonstrate organizational and time management skills and ability to prioritize activities effectively as needed to attend class and clinical rotations and fulfill program requirements.
- Cope with stresses encountered in the intensive educational process as well as clinical practice and research environments.
- Demonstrate consistent work behaviors including initiative, preparedness, dependability, and punctual attendance.
- Tolerate working in environments where there is exposure to disability, differences in appearance, illness, pain, and psychosocial distress.
- Maintain general good health and self-care in order to not jeopardize the health and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical settings.
- Maintain ethical standards including honesty, integrity, and confidentiality, at all times.
- Communicate effectively with instructors, administrators, and supervisors in a timely manner.
- Self-identify and communicate the need for additional resources, accommodations, or information needed for personal success.
- Produce the required volume of work in the expected time frame.

The student must possess sufficient physical and sensory skills to:

- Tolerate sitting up to 3 hours at a time, over an 8-10 hour period.

- Legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, and referrals, etc., in standard medical charts in clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
- Travel to various community and clinical rotation sites for experiential learning.

PROGRAM FACULTY & STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Title	Location	E-mail	Phone
Jessica Denton, PhD, MS, CGC	GCTP Program Director	SHPB 448	jljohnso@uab.edu	205- 934- 6940
Alicia Gomes, MS, CGC	GCTP Faculty; Director of Industry Genetics and Genomic Certificate	SHPB 444	agomes@uab.edu	205- 934- 7299
R. Lynn Holt, MS, CGC	GCTP Director of Curriculum	SHPB 441	lynnholt@uab.edu	205- 975- 2922
Anna Hurst, MS, MD	GCTP Medical Director	Volker1L10	acehurst@uab.edu	205- 934- 9556
Katie Hutto, MS, CGC	Program Faculty	SHPB 449	katiehutto@uab.edu	205- 934- 6942
Floyd Josephat, PhD	Interim CDS Department Chair	SHPB 431	josephat@uab.edu	205- 975- 3111
Klaressa Washington	GCTP Program Manager	SHPB 438	finleyk1@uab.edu	205- 996- 9921

ADVISORY BOARD

The UAB Genetic Counseling Program Advisory Board functions to guide the academic, clinical, and research directions of the program. Members of the advisory board include members of the GCTP and SHP leadership, UAB and offsite clinical genetic counselors, an alumni representative, a consumer representative, a research representative, and an industry representative. The advisory board meets

once per year. The membership roster is maintained by the program leadership and is available upon request.

ADVISING & MENTORING

The Program Director and program leadership are available to discuss the needs and concerns of GCTP students. All GC faculty have regular office hours that are provided in each course syllabus. Formal advising and peer advising are available to all students in the GCTP.

FACULTY ADVISING

Description and Expectations

Students will meet with the program director and/or program leadership a minimum of one time during the following semesters: Fall Y1, Spring Y1, Fall Y2, Spring Y2. Advising goals vary by semester but include a discussion of the academic, clinical, research, and professional development aspects of the student's progress.

Objectives of Advising:

- Open lines of communication between student and program leadership
- Provide the student with a person with whom they can discuss problems, concerns, academic questions, etc.
- Professional development
- Address issues in a constructive session

Expectations of the Advisor:

- To meet with student on a regular basis
- To listen to student concerns, particularly global program issues, didactic coursework issues, clinical rotation issues, and plan II project problems and successes
- To not let their relationship with the students affect their ability to provide feedback on their program performance
- To not let their relationship with the student affect their attitude toward other students
- To document all advising sessions
- Complete and review the "Professional Performance Evaluation" as a part of semester advising

Expectations of the student:

- To meet with their advisor during required timepoints
- To keep their advisor informed of academic and clinical performance and any potential problems or concerns
- To talk to their advisor about any concerns related to course instructors, clinical rotations supervisors etc.
- To keep their advisor informed of their Plan II project
- Complete and review the "Professional Performance Evaluation" and goal setting worksheet for self-assessment as a part of semester advising

Students will also have additional faculty mentors as a part of their Plan II project committee, and they will also have clinical rotation supervisors. Meeting with their project and/or clinical supervisors should not substitute for communication with program leadership. If students have a concern about their clinical supervisor or project committee mentors or members, they should speak to the program director. Should any student have an issue regarding the program director and/or program leadership that they would like to discuss with a faculty member, they are encouraged to meet with the program's medical director or the Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (CDS) Chairperson. Students can contact the program director and/or program leadership, the medical director, or the CDS Chair at any time if an issue arises; they do not need to wait until formal advising to bring issues to light.

UAB GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAM PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Professional skills and attitudes are essential components of the UAB Genetic Counseling Program. This form will be reviewed during student advising. Students are expected to meet standards in all areas listed below, *with at least a score of 2 in all categories, but the standard is a score of 3*. If a student receives an unsatisfactory response (score of 1) in any category, they will be required to complete an individualized action plan.

Professionalism Skills Rubric

Student Name:	Semester:			
Faculty Advisor Name:	Date:			
Rating Scale: 4 - Superior 3 - Consistently Meets Expectations 2 - Inconsistently Meets Expectations 1 - Unsatisfactory <i>* A score of 1 (Unsatisfactory) in any category, requires remediation</i>				
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	4	3	2	1
Maintains program's business casual dress code.				
Attends required activities and arrives on time.				
Demonstrates reliability, dependability and completes tasks fully and on time.				
Conducts self in an ethical manner; demonstrates honesty, consideration and respect towards faculty, staff, and peers.				
Displays a positive attitude, enthusiasm and attentiveness in all academic				
Displays positive behavior and maintains composure during adverse interactions or situations.				
Communicates effectively, and in a polite and timely manner (including verbal and written forms of communication).				
Demonstrates good interpersonal skills, cooperation, and engagement in team				
Demonstrates self-awareness and accepts responsibility for educational challenges and self-learning.				
Demonstrates the ability to receive, integrate and utilize feedback from faculty and instructors.				
Recognizes and maintains appropriate boundaries with faculty.				
Relates to peers, professors and others in a manner consistent with stated professional standards outlined in the Student Handbook.				
Demonstrates cooperation and collaboration when working with faculty and those in positions of authority.				
Demonstrates appropriate self-control (such as anger control, impulse control) in interpersonal relationships with faculty, peers and others.				
Respects individual differences when interacting with peers				

PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

First year GCTP students will be matched by the program faculty with a second-year peer mentor. The second-year students provide peer insights into how to successfully traverse the challenges that face the new students in a genetic counseling program. This mentorship program is designed to be an informal, student driven experience to help students adjust to life as a graduate student, discuss common topics and other issues that arise in graduate school. As part of the mentor/mentee relationship, students are not to provide their mentee with program related materials that could impact the grade of a student (old assignments, projects, etc.). In addition, specific information about tests and other forms of program evaluation should not be discussed. The request for or provision of these materials or information constitutes academic misconduct.

ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM

Second year GCTP students will be matched by the program faculty with a volunteer alumni mentor. The alumni mentor and second year student will discuss things related to clinical rotations, job searching, the board exam, and negotiating job offers. As part of the mentor/mentee relationship, mentors are not to provide their mentee with program related materials that could impact the grade of a student (old assignments, projects, etc.). In addition, specific information about tests and other forms of program evaluation should not be discussed. The request for or provision of these materials or information constitutes academic misconduct.

CURRICULUM

All required courses for the UAB GCTP are listed below by semester with the number of credit hours in parentheses. The suffix 'QL' indicates a course is delivered online. The suffix 'HP' indicates that a course has an online and an in-person option. The suffix 'SL' indicates service learning. If there is no suffix, the course is delivered in person. Students will complete courses in the order presented below.

Fall Semester Year 1 (17 hours)

CDS 505-HP Professional Skills (1)
CDS 610-QL Research Design and Statistics (3)
GC 501 Genetics in Medicine (3)
GC 510 Introduction to Genetic Counseling (3)
GC 560-HP Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)
GC 725 Advanced Medical Genetics and Genomics (3)
ECG 621 Theories in Counseling (3)

Spring Semester Year 1 (15 hours)

ANSC 656 Human Embryology (2)
GC 504 Prenatal Genetics, Embryology, and Teratology (3)

GC 506 Theory and Practice of Genetic Counseling (3)
GC 505 Principles of Cancer and Adult Genetics and Counseling (3)
GC 560-HP Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)
ECG 638 Counseling Skills and Techniques (3)

Summer Semester (7 hours)

GC 650 Clinical Laboratory Rotation (2)
GC 651 Clinical Rotation I (4)
GC 698-QL Non-thesis Research (1)

Fall Semester Year 2 (9 hours)

GC 560-QL Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)
GC 600-QL Advanced Clinical Skills in Genetic Counseling (2)
GC 652 Clinical Rotation II (2)
GC 653 Clinical Rotation III (2)
GC 698-QL Non-thesis Research (1)
CDS 605-QL Survival Spanish for Health Professionals (1)

Spring Semester Year 2 (9 hours)

GC 560-QL Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)
GC 602-QL Advanced Topics in Genetic Counseling (2)
GC 654 Clinical Rotation IV (2)
GC 655 Clinical Rotation V (2)
GC 698-QL Non-thesis Research (2)

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (CDS) Courses

CDS 505 Professional Skills (1 hour) Fall Year 1

Development of behavioral competencies expected of entry-level health professionals.

CDS 610 Research Design and Statistics (3 hours) Fall Year 1

This course will introduce the student to clinical research methods and review concepts involved in descriptive and inferential statistics. Topics covered include overview of the research process, literature

review, research hypothesis, research designs, sample selection, measurement methods, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics.

CDS 605 Survival Spanish for Health Care Professionals (1 hour) Fall Year 2

Health care professionals will be introduced to basic vocabulary, useful questions, and expressions in Spanish needed to communicate in practical health care situations. Students will participate in speaking exercises, dialogue, and role-play activities (field-specific scenarios).

School of Education Coursework

ECG 621 Theories of Individual Counseling (3 hours) Fall Year 1

Educational, vocational, and personal counseling. Observations and simulations.

ECG 638 Practicum I: Clinical Skills / Techniques (3 hours) Spring Year 1

Practicum introducing the counseling process.

School of Medicine Courses

ANSC 656 Human Embryology (2 hours) Spring Year 1

This course uses didactic lectures, lab exercises and student presentations to help students gain an understanding of the major events in human development from gastrulation to birth. Individual units focus on the developmental processes of specific organ systems. The course uses an anatomical focus to describe the morphological characteristics of the developing embryo/fetus. The biochemical and molecular biology of development are only briefly discussed. Morphology and anatomy are also related to clinical presentation of birth defects.

Genetic Counseling (GC) Courses

GC 725 Advanced Medical Genetics and Genomics (3 hours) Fall Year 1

This course will focus on the medical application of advances in genetics and genomics. Topics will include chromosome structure and function and major types of chromosomal abnormalities, cancer genetics and cytogenetics, inborn errors of metabolism, current strategies for detection of mutations associated with genetic disorders, genetic risk assessment and population genetics, and genomic approaches to diagnosis and risk stratification.

GC 501 Genetics in Medicine (3 hours) Fall Year 1

An overview of the clinical evaluation and assessment of an individual with a congenital anomaly, intellectual disability, and/or genetic condition. This will include the introduction to the etiology of common genetic conditions and testing and treatment options for genetic disorders.

GC 510 Introduction to Genetic Counseling (3 hours) Fall Year 1

Introduction to the field of genetic counseling and the basic principles of the profession.

GC 506 Theory and Practice of Genetic Counseling (3 hours) Spring Year 1

Advanced genetic counseling skills as preparation to enter clinical settings.

GC 504 Prenatal Genetics, Embryology, and Teratology (3 hours) Spring Year 1

Overview of embryology, teratology and physiology as related to human development and genetic disease and their applications in prenatal genetic counseling.

GC 505 Principles of Cancer and Adult Genetics and Counseling (3 hours) Spring Year 1

Genetic mechanisms of genetic cancer syndromes, cancer predisposition, and adult-onset disorders as well as the psychosocial issues related to these conditions that influence the genetic counseling process.

GC 560 Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1 hour) Fall Year 1/Year 2, Spring Year 1/Year 2

Review, presentation, and discussion of relevant literature in medical genetics and genomics, and genetic counseling.

GC 698 Non-thesis Research (1-2 hours) Summer Year 2/Fall Year 2/Spring Year 2

Graduate level research project under the supervision of clinical faculty.

GC 600 Advanced Clinical Skills in Genetic Counseling (2 hours) Fall Year 2

This course provides students with advanced genetic counseling clinical skills in areas such as communication, research, industry, and reflective practice.

GC 602 Advanced Topics in Genetic Counseling (2 hours) Spring Year 2

Exploration of advanced topics in the field of genetic counseling that relate to clinical practice and non-clinical professional duties as a genetic counselor.

Rotation Coursework**GC 650 Laboratory Rotation (2 hours) Summer**

This lab rotation will provide students with information about clinical laboratory methods and protocols, testing procedures and specimen management, and other related topics.

GC 651 Clinical Rotation I (4 hours) Summer

Initial clinical rotation for students to establish basic skill set in genetic counseling applications. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

GC 652 Clinical Rotation II (2 hours) Fall Year 2

Students utilized intermediate clinical skills in assigned clinical setting. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

GC 653 Clinical Rotation III (2 hours) Fall Year 2

Students will apply progressive genetic counseling skills in clinical setting. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

GC 654 Clinical Rotation IV (2 hours) Spring Year 2

Students will demonstrate advanced clinical genetic counseling skills. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

GC 655 Clinical Rotation V (2 hours) Spring Year 2

Advanced clinical rotation to allow student additional exposure in area of interest. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

COURSE FORMAT

During the first year of the program, all courses are taken on campus, in-person with the exception of CDS 610 and CDS 505. In the second year of the program, GC 600, GC 602, GC 560, and GC 698 are online, synchronous classes to accommodate students attending rotations offsite. These courses are taught synchronously to facilitate continued student engagement regardless of the student's rotation location. CDS 605 is an online asynchronous course that is offered in the fall of the second year of the program.

TEXTBOOKS

Required and recommended reading for each course will be provided in each course syllabus. Certain required textbooks are available for loan in the Lister Hill Library or as an e-book as provided by the Lister Hill Library. For a complete list of titles available from Lister Hill Library see: [UAB Libraries](#)

Required Program Textbooks

TITLE	AUTHOR(S)	ISBN-13	COURSE
Facilitating the Genetic Counseling Process: Practice Based skills, 2 nd ed.	Patricia McCarthy-Veach, Bonnie S. LeRoy, Nancy P. Callahan	978-3-319-74798-9	GC 510, 506
The Practical Guide to The Genetic Family History, 2 nd Edition	Robin L. Bennett	978-0-470-04072-0	GC 510, 506
Foundations of Perinatal Genetic Counseling	Amber Mathiesen and Kali Roy	978-0-190-68109-8	GC 504
A Guide to Genetic Counseling, 3rd Edition	Vivian Pan, Jane Schuette, Karen Wain, Beverly Yasher	978-1119892083	GC 510, 506
Counseling about Cancer: Strategies for Genetic Counseling, 4 th Edition	Katherine Schneider	978-1119466468	GC 505, Cancer Rotation

Practical Genetic Counseling, 8 th edition	Peter Harper	978-1444183740	GC 501
Genetic Counseling Practice: Advanced Concepts and Skills, 2 nd edition	Bonnie S. LeRoy, Patricia McCarthy-Veach, and Nancy P. Callanan	978-1119529859	GC 506 and GC 600
Genetic Counseling Research	I. M. Macfarlane, P. McCarthy Veach, and B. S. LeRoy	978-0-19-935909-7	GC 698
Thompson and Thompson Genetics in Medicine, 9 th edition	R. Cohn, S Scherer, and A. Hamosh	978-0323547628	GC 725

**Additional readings (articles, original publications, etc.) may also be required for coursework or rotations in addition to these textbooks. These references and/or readings will be available in course materials via Canvas, listed in the syllabus for the course, or from the UAB electronic journal access.

*Several of these textbooks are available in the UAB Lister Hill Library but cannot be checked out from the library (or have a 1-day loan period).

Recommended reading is also referenced below. These textbooks are not required for coursework. They are listed here as you may find them helpful as supplemental texts or as preparation for board exams in the future. Many of the required and recommended texts used for the UAB Genetic Counseling Program are included on the ABGC's list of references for those studying for the ABGC Certification Exam.

- *Smith's Recognizable Patterns of Human Malformation* by Kenneth Jones
- *Chromosome Abnormalities and Genetic Counseling* by Gardner and Sutherland
- *Introduction to Risk Calculation in Genetic Counseling* by Ian Young
- *Psychosocial Genetic Counseling* by Jon Weil

CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Course updates, syllabi, assignments, tests and more are found in a Canvas Learning shell for each course. All students are required to utilize Canvas for course materials as the instructor will not provide individual copies of materials. Slides for each course may be posted on the course Canvas site with permission of the lecturer. Students are not allowed to reproduce or use any slides provided in the program for their own presentations or publications without written consent from the author. Access to each course's Canvas shell and its materials only lasts during the semester the student is enrolled in the class. Any materials that the students would like to retain from the course's shell for future use or study should be saved to a personal drive before the end of the semester.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course work exchange will occur through the UAB learning management system, Canvas. Technology support is provided through the [UAB Office of Learning Technologies](#). All students are required to have a webcam and microphone to attend online courses.

CANVAS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Students should contact Canvas Support for course related issues such as an inability to access a course, error messages from their computer when clicking on course tools, computer crashing during a quiz or if they cannot submit an assignment. <https://www.uab.edu/elearning/academic-technologies/canvas>

Students should contact UAB Technical Support if they need help setting up their computer, for example a software installation, Microsoft office assistance, or Java issues, then contact UAB eLearning and professional students. <http://www.uab.edu/elearning/students>.

TEACHING & COURSE EVALUATIONS

The UAB GCTP and the university administer IDEA teaching and course evaluations at the end of each semester. This is an opportunity for students to share with faculty their experience with the course. This information is used to modify course content and for accreditation purposes. All surveys are anonymous and voluntary. Due to the small cohort size of the program, each student is **strongly** encouraged to participate in IDEA surveys so faculty can get an accurate assessment of how students experienced and progressed in the course. Some GCTP courses will also distribute a course evaluation via Qualtrics to gain additional feedback from students. Discussion of non-GC pre-fix courses occurs during formal advising and students are encouraged to share feedback on these courses with program leadership.

GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

For a student to maintain good academic standing in the Graduate School, a grade point average of at least 3.0 (B average) and overall satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses is required. Satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses is defined as the earning of at least as many hours of P grades as hours of NP grades combined. ([UAB Graduate School Academic Progress Policies](#))

In addition, Genetic Counseling Program students must successfully receive a grade of B or better in all core genetic counseling (GC prefix) classes and clinical rotations. If a student receives a grade below a B, they are required to remediate the course. Remediation guidelines depend on the course and the student. More information about remediation policies is listed below.

COMPLAINT POLICIES

UAB is committed to reviewing and responding to student complaints appropriately. A complaint is an expression of discontent based on the result of behavior or circumstances that the student believes are unjust, unsafe, inequitable, or create an unnecessary hardship. Course grade appeals and appeals of dismissal decisions are described as separate processes in this Handbook. Students are encouraged to first express dissatisfaction or complaints to the following individuals to come to a resolution. For

courses that are administered solely by the Genetic Counseling program the following complaint structure is in place.

- Complaint related to a guest speaker should be directed to the course director.
- Complaint related to a faculty member or fellow student should be directed to the program director.
- Complaint related to a clinical supervisor should be directed to the clinical coordinator and program director.
- Complaint related to the program director should be directed to the CDS Department Chair.

Complaints related to courses that are provided by other units at UAB can be directed to the GC program director for assistance in addressing the concern.

If a student is unable to resolve a complaint by an informal discussion with the individuals listed above, the student may utilize the formal [complaint reporting mechanism](#) outlined in the Graduate School Catalog.

Complaints related to disabilities, Title IX (gender discrimination), or other forms of discrimination can also be reported through these channels:

- [Disability Related Grievance Procedure](#)
- Title IX Incident [Reporting](#)
- [UAB Office of Access and Engagement Discrimination Complaint Form](#)

ACGC Complaint Policy

ACGC has a formal complaint policy that may be utilized if a student or others have concerns about the quality of an accredited genetic counseling program. Additional information and the ACGC Complaint form are available on the [ACGC website](#).

TITLE IX

In accordance with Title IX, the University of Alabama at Birmingham does not discriminate on the basis of gender in any of its programs or services. The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on gender and expects individuals who live, work, teach, and study within this community to contribute positively to the environment and to refrain from behaviors that threaten the freedom or respect that every member of our community deserves. For more information about Title IX, policy, reporting, protections, resources, and supports, please visit the UAB Title IX [webpage](#).

PROBATION & DISMISSAL

A degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking graduate student, who, at the end of any semester, fails to meet the criteria to maintain good academic standing will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation must re-establish good academic standing within the next two semesters during which they are enrolled at UAB. Failure to reestablish good academic standing at the end of their second

term of enrollment while on academic probation will result in academic dismissal from the UAB Graduate School.

The rules stated above govern academic probation and dismissal administered by the Graduate School. Individual graduate programs may establish and administer program probation and dismissal governed by more stringent requirements. In general, a student's retention in a specific graduate program is contingent on the faculty's belief that the student is likely to complete the program successfully. If the faculty ceases to hold this belief at any point, the student may be dismissed from the program. It is a graduate student's responsibility to be aware of and abide by program academic standing requirements in addition to the [general academic standing policy in the Graduate School](#). Program probation and dismissal policies preempt the Graduate School policies.

[The School of Health Professions Failure to Make Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) policy is as follows:

A student who fails to make acceptable academic progress after admission to a degree or certificate program in the School of Health Professions will be administratively dismissed from the program. Dismissal for academic non-performance may be defined as failure to maintain a minimum required GPA, specified to UAB, The Graduate School and/or program requirement), or by a final coarse grade of C, D, or F in one or more required program courses (as stated in the specific program handbook). A student may appeal the dismissal decision following [the defined administrative procedure](#).

WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE, TERM OR MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal from a course, full term or a medical withdrawal must be considered in light of the dates published in the UAB Academic Calendar and the [Add/Drop and Withdrawal Policy](#). Graduate students who wish to make changes to their registration outside of the assigned add/drop or withdrawal periods must [submit an academic appeal to the Graduate School](#). Any student considering withdrawing from one or more courses is required to meet with the program director to discuss how the withdrawal will impact their training timeline and graduation from the program.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM AND UNIVERISTY

Any student that is considering withdrawing from the program must meet with the program director to discuss how the withdrawal will impact their training and ability to graduate from the program in the future. Students who wish to withdraw from the university must submit a written request to the Graduate School expressing their intent to withdraw.

APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

Each candidate for a master's degree must signify the intention to complete the requirements by a particular graduation date by completing the online application for degree in the graduation planning system (GPS) through Blazernet. Because this form is used to check completion of requirements, order the diploma, and enter the student in the commencement program, the online form must be completed by the deadline provided online. This deadline is typically in **January of Y2**. Students must be registered

for at least 3 semester hours of graduate work in the semester they plan to graduate. For the UAB GCTP, the program director's approval of the student's application for degree serves as an indication that they are ready to graduate from the UAB GCTP at the end of the semester. If the program director does not think the student will successfully complete the program by the end of the semester, an individual meeting with that student will be scheduled by the program director to discuss the student's academic plan. Graduation readiness will also be discussed during advising in the Fall of Y2 or could be discussed at other points throughout the program, depending on the student.

NOTE: The issuing of the MS degree is not contingent upon the student passing any type of external certification or licensure examination.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend class either in person or virtually as designated by the course format in Banner. Classes with the "QL" suffix indicate that class is conducted virtually, and, therefore, students should attend class via Zoom or as otherwise instructed in the course syllabus. If a course does not have a "QL" suffix, the course is taught in a traditional face-to-face format.

All students joining class via Zoom will comply with all course, department, and university policies. Students are required to enable their microphone and webcam to fully participate in class. Students are required to join from a private, secure location with minimal distractions (no pets or other individuals, including children, should be in the room with the student during class). Students should not join class via Zoom while driving or from a public space (restaurant, coffee shop, hotel lobby, etc.).

If a student is unable to attend class in person for a reason listed in the attendance policy, but would be able to attend class virtually, they may request to attend the class virtually. The request must be made in advance of the class meeting. It is up to the discretion of the course instructor as to whether the student will be able to join class virtually or not.

Requests to attend class virtually for reasons that are not listed as an excused absence will be at the discretion of the instructor. Virtual attendance to an in-person class session for an unexcused absence will be counted as an unexcused absence. Students should review the attendance policy in the Genetic Counseling Student Handbook and in the course syllabi to understand what qualifies as an excused or unexcused absence.

Students are encouraged to be present during clinical rotations so as not to miss out on critical learning experiences and to preserve the clinical rotation schedule. It is highly recommended that students schedule appointments or other activities during days when they do not have clinic. Students should refer to the absence policy in the Clinical Rotation Manual for more information about how to manage an unavoidable absence.

Please note that the UAB GCTP will engage in the interactive process with students who have absence-related accommodations approved by Disability Support Services and who have followed DSS procedures to notify their instructors of such accommodations.

The UAB GCTP following the attendance policies outlined below.

The [Undergraduate Catalog policy on attendance](#) states, "UAB recognizes that the academic success of individual students is related to their class attendance and participation."

"The University regards certain absences as excused and in those instances requires that instructors provide a reasonable accommodation for the student who misses assignments, presentations, examinations, or other academic work of a substantive nature by virtue of these excused absences.

Examples include the following:

- Absences due to jury or military duty, provided that official documentation has been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.
- Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences" provided students give their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.
- Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the university in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:
 - Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.
 - If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.
- Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students.
- Absences due to religious observances provided that students give faculty written notice prior to the drop/add deadline of the term."

In these instances, instructors must give students the opportunity to complete assignments in a way that corresponds as much as possible to the nature, scope and format of the original. Options may include making up exams or other assignments, rescheduling student classroom presentations, or arranging for early or late submission of written assignments.

Online Attendance Policy

Attendance in online courses consists of course participation. This required participation in the course consists of such activities as regular contributions on the discussion board, engaging in group assignments, or attendance at online presentations provided through web conferencing applications. In this course, points may be earned for participation (see Course Evaluation and List of assignments for more details). Student participation may be evaluated through the interactions on the discussion board, completion of assignments, and/or other ways as specified in the syllabus.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM

Any student that fails a course (grade of F) is required to meet with the program director to discuss their standing in the program as described in the 'Scholastic Requirements' section.

A student will be dismissed from the program if:

- a student fails two GC courses
- a student fails the same GC or non-GC course twice
- a student is unable to meet the UAB Genetic Counseling Program Essential Functions and/or Technical Standards

If a student is dismissed from the program, an official letter notifying the student of their dismissal will be sent to the student from the program director and the student will be administratively dismissed from the program. Students dismissed from the program may have the opportunity to re-apply to the program, but they must sit out at least 2 semesters before they are eligible to re-apply. Students that wish to re-apply must make an appointment to meet with the program director (face-to-face) to discuss the training path required to complete the program. Upon meeting with the program director, if the student would like to re-apply to the program, they can do so by completing the full application process.

NOTE: Re-applicants for re-admission to the program will be evaluated on the same criteria as all other applicants, and the program does not guarantee that the student's re-admission will be granted.

GRADES

The grade of A indicates superior performance, B indicate adequate performance, and C indicates performance only minimally adequate for a graduate student. Any graduate student completing a course at the 500 level or above with a performance below the C level will receive a grade of F; the [Graduate School does not use the grade of D](#). For courses designated as pass/not pass, a grade of P (passing) signifies satisfactory work. A grade of NP (not passing) indicates unsatisfactory work although there is no penalty assessed with respect to the grade point average (GPA).

The grades for academic coursework are compiled, as stated in the syllabus for the course, to develop a final course grade. The course instructor will inform the students of the system of proportioning of scores used to develop the course grade via the syllabus. Minimum performance criteria designated by the course instructor must be achieved by the student. These criteria indicate the level of competency of the individual student.

The student's grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the total quality points awarded by a student's semester hours attempted at the graduate level. Students can view their cumulative GPA in [BlazerNET](#) and can view their term GPA on their transcript which is also available in [BlazerNET](#). Quality points are awarded as follows:

Quality Points	Letter Grade
4	A
3	B

2

C

None

P, NP, F, or WF

Students are strongly discouraged to share their assignment or course grades with one another. The UAB GCTP encourages a non-competitive environment and sharing grades is counter-productive to student progress.

GRADE APPEALS

Students should work directly with their course instructor(s) to address grade disputes. If the student and the instructor are not able to come to a satisfactory solution, the student may contact the program director or the CDS Department Chair. Grade appeal information can be found in the course syllabi and is listed below.

Grade Appeal Procedure

If a student thinks that they have been unfairly or incorrectly graded, they should submit a written appeal within 48 hours of the date on which the assignment or exam was returned. In the appeal the student should include (1) the specific question or aspect of the assignment of concern (2) what the student thinks the correct response is to the question/assignment (3) explain their reasoning for selecting the answer or completing the assignment in the way student chose, and include a PUBLISHED reference that supports their answer, for example, a copy of a page from a text or a journal article. The student's handwritten notes from class are not sufficient to defend a response (4) suggest a way to re-write the question to minimize confusion for learners in the future. All appeals must be emailed directly to the instructor with GRADE APPEAL in the subject line.

SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS

The Genetic Counseling Program requires that students maintain an overall "B" (3.0) grade point average in compliance with the UAB Graduate School. Students should obtain an "A" or "B" in all program courses (GC prefix), including clinical rotations. Failure to make an "A" or "B" will result in remediation and/or repeating the course as determined by the program director and course instructor.

A student who receives a grade of "F" in any course or clinical rotation, the student will meet with the program director to review the student's overall performance in the program and potential options for continuing in the program. If the program director determines the student cannot meet the Essential Functions and/or Technical Standards of the Genetic Counseling Program, the student will be dismissed from the program. If it is deemed appropriate for a student to continue in the program, the student will be required to repeat the course the next time the course is offered or an acceptable course substitution to satisfy the learning objectives of the course and program. The student must formally register for the course and is responsible for all associated tuition and fees for the course. As many courses for the genetic counseling program are only offered at specific times during the academic year, repeating a course could result in a delay of graduation for the student and impact their clinical training

schedule. Students will receive a letter that outlines the impact of repeating a course on their clinical training schedule and the academic expectations for the student to continue in the program.

TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE CLASSROOM

Students are expected to use technology in the classroom according to UAB policies and comply with directions included in each course syllabus.

The use of any personal computational or communications devices in the classroom, not otherwise governed by UAB or course policies, is subject to the approval of the instructor. This includes (but is not limited to) the use of calculators, computers, and cell phones. **Any such devices without instructor approval are not permitted.**

The use of such devices without permission of the instructor may be considered a violation of UAB's non-academic conduct policies. The use of such devices to facilitate an act of academic misconduct (such as cheating or plagiarism) will be considered a violation of the [UAB Academic Integrity Code](#) and will be sanctioned as outlined in the Code.

CLINICAL TRAINING

The clinical experience component at UAB provides students with a breadth of experience in traditional and non-traditional areas of genetic counseling. The ACGC Standards of Accreditation and Practice Based Competencies, ABGC Practice Analysis, and board certification guidelines were all considered in the development of this portion of the program. The clinical experience begins as a part of the didactic coursework offered in the first year. Introducing students to the clinic early in the program is designed to offer a clinical perspective to the information discussed in the classroom and to foster the development of critical thinking about genetic counseling principles early in each student's education. During this first year, students have multiple opportunities for experiences such as observing counseling sessions, taking shadow pedigrees, preparing session outlines, writing patient letters, simulations with standardized patients, and recorded role playing. After their first year of the program, each student will complete the following rotations in which they take an active role:

One 2-3-week summer laboratory rotation

One 4-6-week summer clinical rotation

Four 7–8-week clinical rotations during the fall and spring of the second year

Rotation types can include prenatal, pediatric, specialty clinics, cancer, adult, and research genetic counseling. There are 4 required *clinical* rotations (prenatal, pediatric, cancer, and specialty/adult) and one required *laboratory* rotation. Rotations are designed so that students can use one of their clinical rotations to develop an area of personal interest, to gain the type of logbook cases still needed, or for remediation as needed. Students will incorporate their clinical experiences from rotations into their second-year courses through teaching and reflection on the genetic counseling process. Documentation for clinical experience will consist of midpoint and final evaluations for each rotation completed by the clinical supervisor, clinical site and supervisor evaluations completed by the student, an online case logbook for student documentation of participatory and supplemental cases, and a rotation report for

each rotation generated by the program to document the student's cumulative case and PBC attainment. Rotation hours are represented as credit hours. Each rotation has a syllabus, and students will receive a letter grade for each rotation.

Laboratory Rotation	Rotation I	Rotation II	Rotation III	Rotation IV	Rotation V
Summer	Summer	Fall, 2nd Year	Fall, 2nd Year	Spring, 2nd Year	Spring, 2nd Year
2-3 Weeks	4-6 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks
5 days or 40 contact hours weekly 80-90 Contact Hours	3-4 Days or 24-32 Hours Weekly 140-180 Contact Hours	2-3 Half Days or 8-12.5 Hours Weekly 70-90 Contact Hours	2-3 Half Days or 8-12.5 Hours Weekly 70-90 Contact Hours	2-3 Half Days or 8-12.5 Hours Weekly 70-90 Contact Hours	2-3 Half Days or 8-12.5 Hours Weekly 70-90 Contact Hours

Student's responsibilities and rotation expectations/policies are further outlined in the **UAB Genetic Counseling Program Rotation Manual**, which will be distributed to students and reviewed with students prior to their first rotation.

eValue Information: Each supervisor and each student will obtain eValue log-in information. eValue will be used to document participatory and non-participatory cases, clinical rotation evaluations, and rotation reports. Students and supervisors will be offered an orientation to eValue. Additional instructions for students on how to use eValue will be in Canvas.

The following eValue concepts will be reviewed with students and supervisors:

- Demonstrate how to access and enter a logbook case
- Demonstrate how supervisor will access to review logbook cases and "sign off" on it
- Demonstrate how to access and complete a student evaluation
- Demonstrate how to access and complete a site evaluation and evaluation of the supervisor
- Demonstrate how to enter/review rotation goals

Onboarding Requirements

Each rotation site has unique requirements for student onboarding. Common requirements include a criminal background check, drug screen, proof of immunizations and vaccinations, yearly tuberculosis screening, and sharing of personal information with clinical rotation sites such as contact information. All costs associated with onboarding are the responsibility of the student. Additional information about onboarding requirements is available in the Rotation Manual and in the SHP Clinical Student Checklist on

the [Student Health Website](#). Students sign a FERPA release form allowing the program to share information with rotation sites for onboarding purposes.

STUDENT TRAVEL FUND

A Student Travel Fund was established in 2017 to assist UAB Genetic Counseling Training Program (GCTP) students with costs associated with off-site clinical rotations occurring during their second year of training. Disbursements are dependent on the amount of monies in the fund and are not guaranteed in any way. Should funds be available, funding will then be awarded to a student at their request. Students may receive up to \$100 while enrolled in the program. The process by which these funds can be requested is outlined in the *Student Travel Funds Distribution Policy and Procedure*. Students must request funds prior to travel and submit documentation for the disbursement of travel funds within 7 calendar days of incurring the expense.

School of Health Professions- Genetic Counseling Program

Policy Name: Student Travel Funds Distribution Policy and Procedure

Date Approved: 6/1/2018

Approver(s): Lynn Holt, Jessica Denton

Background: Beginning in the Fall of 2017, a travel fund was established to assist UAB Genetic Counseling Training Program (GCTP) students with costs associated with off-site clinical rotations occurring during their second year of training. This policy is intended to outline the process by which these funds could be distributed to students. Travel is defined as mileage, airfare, or hotel costs.

Policy Content: Depending on the amount of funds available, monies included in the travel fund will be used for student assistance according to the following priorities:

- Travel to the UAB campus from the site of the clinical rotation for the last week of the program and graduation. May also include hotel costs for this time period.
- Travel between the UAB campus and the site of the clinical rotation for remediation. May also include hotel costs for this time period.
- Travel between two non-UAB clinical rotation sites during a transition between rotations.
- Travel between UAB and clinical rotation sites.

Funds cannot be used for travel from the student's permanent residence to UAB or from the student's permanent residence to an offsite clinical rotation.

Funds for mileage will be reimbursed after they have been incurred. Receipts should be turned into CDS administrative staff in a timely manner. Hotel stays and flights must be directly arranged through CDS administration staff. **Procedure:** The potential availability of the Student Travel Fund to assist with student travel will be included in the Student Handbook and discussed during orientation. Funds can be requested any time after successful completion of the first year in the program. In order to be considered, the student must be in good standing. A maximum level of approved funding will then be awarded at the discretion of the program director, taking into account the financial need and anticipated overall amount of program-related travel costs for the applicants.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CLINICAL TRAINING TRACKS

Off-site clinical rotations in Year 2 may impact the estimated cost of the program and differ by training track. Students may request an adjustment to the amount of financial assistance awarded them by direct request to the UAB Financial Aid Office (<https://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/>).

EVALUATION OF CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

The level of performance expected for students during clinical rotations are reflected in the rotation benchmarks and learning objectives, which can be found in the general syllabus for each rotation (in Canvas and eValue). These objectives reflect the increasing independence of the student and evolution of feedback from supervisors as rotations progress. When evaluating students, supervisors should consider the experience of the student and evaluate them according to expectations consistent with their experience. Rotation progress benchmarks, feedback definitions, and general rotation learning objectives are available in the rotation manual, Canvas, eValue, and on the supervisor website. Each rotation could have additional learning objectives specific to the rotation type. The student will also engage in goal setting for each clinical rotation.

Students will receive a midpoint evaluation for each rotation that is nearly identical to the final evaluation. The midpoint evaluation is not used in grading, but the final evaluation is used as part of the rotation grade calculation. Other aspects of the student's rotation grade include completion of goal setting, site and supervisor evaluations, and completion of target case numbers and roles. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate their clinical supervisor and the clinical experience. Student evaluation of the clinical site is available to the supervisor once the student enters the evaluation. Student evaluation of the supervisor will be distributed to supervisors by the program faculty after at least two students have attended that rotation site with that specific supervisor to maintain anonymity. Students must successfully complete each clinical rotation to fulfill the clinical requirements for graduation. They also must obtain the required cases for the ABGC certification exam as a requirement for graduation.

CPR TRAINING

CPR training is required for all SHP clinical students. CPR training will be coordinated by the program and obtained at the end of the spring semester of the first year.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN TRAINING

To complete the online Bloodborne Pathogen training course (BIO300), UAB students should go to the following website: <https://www.uab.edu/learningsystem/>. This training should be completed prior to the beginning of GC 650 as preparation for the clinical lab rotation.

GRADUATE PROJECT INFORMATION

NON-THESIS PLAN II PROJECT:

In keeping with the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) accreditation requirements and Practice Based Competencies, the UAB Genetic Counseling Program has students implement a research study or scholarly activity. This requirement is consistent with the UAB Graduate School's Plan II project.

All students will complete a non-thesis graduate Plan II project. The UAB Graduate School recognizes two principal paths, Plan I and Plan II, which lead to the master's degree. Plan II may not require research and does not require a formal thesis, but a minimum of 30 semester hours of appropriate graduate work must be completed in good academic standing. Although thesis research is not required as part of a Plan II course of study, the student is expected to gain insight into the techniques of problem posing and problem solving and to use these insights to prepare a written manuscript. The curriculum is outlined below and detailed in the syllabi mentioned. Completion of this Plan II project is designed to meet the Research related ACGC Practice Based Competencies.

Objectives of the Plan II project include:

- Gaining insight into problem posing and solving
- Completion of IRB training on human subjects research
- Learning to appropriately cite and reference published works
- Gain experience developing grammatically sound, clear, and proficient scientific writing
- Implement a research project or scholarly activity that will contribute to the field of genetics, with the projects' rationale and objectives clearly defined and the research methodology outlined and described
- Communicate & collaborate with faculty committee to gather feedback, review project plans, meet program deadlines.
- Engage in self-reflection/evaluation of writing and the peer review process
- If applicable to the project, appreciate the role of statistics and data analysis, with focus on interpreting results and applying them to the research question or project as applicable
- Synthesize the evidence base relevant to genetic counseling (Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) Practice Based Competency (PBC) 5.)
- Critically interpret data and literature (ACGC PBC 5.a.)
- Apply data and literature considering its strengths, weaknesses, and limitations (ACGC PBC 5.b.)
- Demonstrate knowledge of how genetic counselors engage and contribute to the research process (ACGC PBC 5.c.)

Note: Specific requirements related to deadlines are found within the Project Manual, which is distributed separately to students. Details regarding the process for choosing an acceptable project idea and producing an acceptable final manuscript are also within that manual.

OVERALL PROJECT TIMELINE:

The Plan II project will be introduced to the students the summer before matriculation. All Plan II projects should be completed within the 21-month time frame of the program. However, if a student is

unable to fully complete his or her project but is making significant progress, an extension may be considered. The student must notify the program director in writing as soon as possible if they feel an extension will be needed. The student must work with the program director, advisor, and project committee to arrange for a timeline of the extension. The student must also remain registered for non-thesis research credit (GC 698) until the project is complete. If an extension is granted, the maximum extension period is one year. The student will graduate in the term in which he or she completes the project. The student is responsible for all tuition and fees with extending their academic training to complete their Plan II project.

UAB GC Program – Project Timeline

Fall Y1-WHAT will I Do?	Spring Y1-HOW will I do it?
Plan II Project Introduction: presentation and project manual (summer prior to the start of classes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library Orientation and GC Research Guide Meet with faculty for ideas and Y2s for advice Project idea form due Decide on topic/question/project Complete CDS 610 or equivalent course Confirm project committee members Complete IRB training (Winter) Begin literature search and review – to determine sufficient and current information (Winter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to writing scientific papers via GC 560 Project topic form due Committee meeting to determine design/plan for implementation and confirm survey and/or project design Complete written proposal (IRB submission if applicable) describing project plan Introductory meeting with stats consultant (Dr. McGwin)
Summer Y1-Get approval to do it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GC 698 (1-hour credit course) IRB revisions if needed Project materials development, if applicable Write literature review and manuscript outline Regular faculty and committee email updates related to the project Committee meeting after IRB approval to discuss next steps 	
Fall Y2-Now I'm doing it	Spring Y2-See what I've done

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GC 698 (1-hour credit course) • Implement project /plan – responsibilities for this will vary by project • Begin to draft manuscript – write introduction, and methods • Data collection and analyze data as relevant Observe posters and presentations at NSGC • Committee meeting to get feedback on introduction and methods section, and status of data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GC 698 (2-hour credit course) • Write results, tables/figures, discussion, and bibliography. Complete and final written manuscript • Committee meeting to review results and final paper Prepare submission for publication • Submit abstract to NSGC or other approved conference • Design poster • Final presentation with committee and faculty Submit final electronic copy of all project materials to program • Recommendation for degree due
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PROJECT COMMITTEES

Each student will have a project committee. Committees are expected to include at least 2 people and will likely include genetic counselors, medical geneticists, PhD researchers, and other health professionals with appropriate qualifications in the field of interest. If projects involve outside organizations or specific topic areas, additional members may be appropriate. One of the committee members must be a GCTP program faculty member. Faculty members from institutions outside UAB are appropriate for certain student projects. The format of the project and requirements for successful completion of the project will be determined by the student, committee advisor, committee, and GC program. The program will work with the student to form the committee. The student is responsible for routinely communicating with their committee regarding the status of their project. Students should provide documentation of each committee member's commitment. This can be done via email communications or by returning the committee member commitment form found in the project manual.

Committee meetings are scheduled by the student. The student is responsible for creating an agenda for these meetings and distributing them in advance. The face-to-face/videoconference meetings are organized to facilitate discussion about the plans for the project, progress of the project, development of the manuscript, and final presentation. Students are responsible for creating minutes from each meeting that summarize the key discussion points and action items. The meeting minutes are to be distributed to the committee members within one week of the meeting. The first committee meeting should be held in the Fall of Y1. Additional involvement through email revision of the manuscript and email feedback are expected. It is expected that each committee will meet at least once each semester beginning in the Fall of Y1 of the program.

In most cases, the project committee advisor will be the genetic counselor or GCTP faculty member on the committee. While all committee members are essential to the development of a successful student project, the committee advisor is someone who has been designated to spearhead efforts with the student - specifically related to attention to time management and process supervision. Some projects may lend themselves to having another professional (not a GC) serve as the advisor, and this is acceptable.

PROJECT BUDGET

Each student has a budget of up to \$200 that can be utilized to support their graduate project based on approval from the program director. There is no guarantee that the program will have funding to supplement all specific project costs, and if there are concerns about feasibility of the budget, a conclusion regarding costs, funding, and student expense should be resolved by the student prior to proceeding beyond the topic selection process. Students who desire funding for their project should complete the application found in the project manual prior to submitting their IRB proposal. The program typically cannot fund participant compensation via gift cards or other methods of payment.

There are also funding opportunities through various outside organizations (e.g. NSGC Special Interest Groups, the NSGC JEMF), which have their own applications. Students are encouraged to pursue these funding opportunities after discussion with the program director and their project committee. Students are expected to be prepared to cover other project-related costs that do not receive funding, which could include cost of copies, mailing costs, survey purchase costs, etc. Students will have access to Qualtrics and REDCap (two common programs to create online surveys) and statistical software including SAS, SPSS, and NVivo through the School of Health Professions (SHP) at no cost to the student. Students will have access to statistical consultants at UAB, but students are encouraged to complete their own statistics when possible. When a student is planning to use surveys, the student should discuss compatibility and potential costs with their program advisor and their stats consultant.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY MEETINGS

A document with a list of required meetings will be provided to students during orientation.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Students will engage in the following opportunities each semester and turn in a log via the Journal Club course the last week of classes.

Professional Development Activities (First- and second-year students)

Lifelong learning and professional development are fundamental components of professional growth and development. UAB offers a wide variety of opportunities for students beyond standard course work to expand their general understanding of genetics and medicine. Professional Development Activities encourage students to participate in these offerings and are a required component of GC 560: Genetic

Counseling Journal Club. Each student is required to acquire **6 professional development activities each semester** and turn in the completed log to the GC 560 course instructor at the end of each semester.

Activities that meet this requirement include:

- Attending a lecture on a genetics topics
- Giving a lecture on a genetics topic
- Attending a lecture or symposium on a related topic (epidemiology, cancer, support group, ethical/legal debates, public health, etc.)
- Friday Genetics Seminar

Notice of campus and community events will be communicated to students as they arise. Students are required to get other events approved by the GC 560 course director ahead of time. Students attending offsite rotations should discuss professional development opportunities with their supervisors.

Presentations, lectures, and required supplemental activities attended as a class or program requirement cannot be counted toward these activities.

UAB
Genetic Counseling Training Program
Professional Development Logbook

6 REQUIRED ACTIVITIES PER SEMESTER

Name of Student

Date	Name of Speaker	Topic/Activity	# of Contact Hours	Population/Audience	Summary of event including key points and application of clinical practice

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

As healthcare providers and members of a university community, service to our supporting community is important and enables one to better understand the individuals in the community that they serve. We encourage students to participate in volunteer work during the program. Some volunteer opportunities will be coordinated by the program. Students will also engage in service learning as part of the course requirements for GC 600 in the fall of their second year. Students can find a listing of community service opportunities on UAB's community engagement platform, BlazerPulse.

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF GENETIC COUNSELING CODE OF ETHICS

A Code of Ethics is a document which attempts to clarify and guide the conduct of a professional so that the goals and values of the profession might best be served.

Preamble:

Genetic counselors are health professionals with specialized education, training, and experience in medical genetics and counseling. The National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) is the leading voice, authority and advocate for the genetic counseling profession. As such, the NSGC is an organization that furthers the professional interests of genetic counselors, promotes a network for communication within the profession, and deals with issues relevant to human genetics. With the establishment of this code of ethics the NSGC affirms the ethical responsibilities of its members and provides them with guidance in their relationships with self, clients, colleagues, and society. NSGC members are expected to be aware of the ethical implications of their professional actions and to adhere to the guidelines and principles set forth in this code.

Introduction

A code of ethics is a document that attempts to clarify and guide the conduct of a professional so that the goals and values of the profession might best be served. The NSGC Code of Ethics is based upon the relationships genetic counselors have with themselves, their clients, their colleagues, and society. Each major section of this code begins with an explanation of one of these relationships, along with some of its values and characteristics. These values are drawn from the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Although certain values are found in more than one relationship, these common values result in different guidelines within each relationship.

No set of guidelines can provide all the assistance needed in every situation, especially when different relationships appear to conflict. Therefore, when considered appropriate for this code, specific guidelines for prioritizing the relationships have been stated. In other areas, some ambiguity remains, allowing for the experience of genetic counselors to provide the proper balance in responding to difficult situations.

Section I: Genetic Counselors Themselves

Genetic counselors value competence, integrity, veracity, dignity, and self-respect in themselves as well as in each other. Therefore, in order to be the best possible human resource to themselves, their clients, their colleagues, and society, genetic counselors strive to:

1. Seek out and acquire sufficient and relevant information required for any given situation.
2. Continue their education and training.
3. Keep abreast of current standards of practice.
4. Recognize the limits of their own knowledge, expertise, and therefore competence in any given situation.
5. Accurately represent their experience, competence, and credentials, including training and academic degrees.
6. Acknowledge and disclose circumstances that may result in a real or perceived conflict of interest.
7. Avoid relationships and activities that interfere with professional judgment or objectivity.
8. Be responsible for their own physical and emotional health as it impacts on their professional performance.

Section II: Genetic Counselors and Their Clients

The counselor-client relationship is based on values of care and respect for the client's autonomy, individuality, welfare, and freedom. The primary concern of genetic counselors is the interests of their clients. Therefore, genetic counselors strive to:

1. Serve those who seek services regardless of personal or external interests or biases.
2. Clarify and define their professional role(s) and relationships with clients and provide an accurate description of their services.
3. Respect their clients' beliefs, inclinations, circumstances, feelings, family relationships and cultural traditions.
4. Enable their clients to make informed decisions, free of coercion, by providing or illuminating the necessary facts, and clarifying the alternatives and anticipated consequences.
5. Refer clients to other qualified professionals when they are unable to support the clients.
6. Maintain information received from clients as confidential, unless released by the client or disclosure is required by law.
7. Avoid the exploitation of their clients for personal advantage, profit, or interest.

Section III: Genetic Counselors and Their Colleagues

The genetic counselors' relationships with other genetic counselors, students, and other health professionals are based on mutual respect, caring, cooperation, and support. Therefore, genetic counselors strive to:

1. Share their knowledge and provide mentorship and guidance for the professional development of other genetic counselors, students, and colleagues.
2. Respect and value the knowledge, perspectives, contributions, and areas of competence of colleagues and students, and collaborate with them in providing the highest quality of service.

3. Encourage ethical behavior of colleagues.
4. Assure that individuals under their supervision undertake responsibilities that are commensurate with their knowledge, experience, and training.
5. Maintain appropriate limits to avoid the potential for exploitation in their relationships with students and colleagues.

Section IV: Genetic Counselors and Society

The relationships of genetic counselors with society include interest and participation in activities that have the purpose of promoting the well-being of society and access to health care. Therefore, genetic counselors, individually or through their professional organizations, strive to:

1. Keep abreast of societal developments that may endanger the physical and psychological health of individuals.
2. Promote policies that aim to prevent discrimination.
3. Oppose the use of genetic information as the basis for discrimination.
4. Participate in activities necessary to bring about socially responsible change.
5. Serve as a source of reliable information and expert opinion for policymakers and public officials.
6. Keep the public informed and educated about the impact on society of new technological and scientific advances and the possible changes in society that may result from the application of these findings.
7. Support policies that assure ethically responsible research.
8. Adhere to laws and regulations of society. However, when such laws are in conflict with the principles of the profession, genetic counselors work toward change that will benefit the public interest.

Adopted 1/92 by the National Society of Genetic Counselors, Inc., and revised 12/04, 1/06, 4/17.