



Genetic Counseling Education Program

PROGRAM POLICIES

2021-2022



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PURPOSE

All University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Students are responsible for the policies listed in the UNMC Student Handbook as well as the College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) Student Handbook (see references). This handbook is intended to describe the policies and procedures specific to the Genetic Counseling Education Program. All students regardless of their year of enrollment, are responsible for knowing and abiding by the policies specific to the Master of Genetic Counseling (MGC) program.

UNMC:

- Student Policies: https://wiki.unmc.edu/index.php/Student_Policies
- Policies and Procedures: https://wiki.unmc.edu/index.php/Policies_and_Procedures
- Student Policies & Procedures: <https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/>

CAHP Student Handbook: https://www.unmc.edu/cahphandbook/index.php/Main_Page

MISSION STATEMENTS

University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Mission

Our mission is to lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities through premier educational programs, innovative research, and extraordinary patient care.

College of Allied Health Professions Mission

The mission of the CAHP is to advance health by:

- Delivering allied health educational programs that prepare graduates to provide high quality, evidence-based, safe care for all patients;
- Conducting scholarly activities that create and disseminate knowledge reflective of the unique contributions of allied health theory and practice;
- Providing high quality, contemporary clinical care in the allied health disciplines; and
- Providing outreach to underserved populations.

Genetic Counseling Program Mission

Our mission is to prepare the next generation of genetic counselors through a state-of-the-art education program dedicated to the pursuit of exemplary patient care in the rapidly expanding field of genetic medicine, advocacy for our profession and community, exceptional research, and lifelong learning.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Recruit matriculates who are dynamic team players that will work hard and represent UNMC well.



- Foster professional development for our future colleagues.
- Develop the student’s knowledge of genetics and encourage a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Support and mentor the development of exceptional interpersonal, psychosocial, and counseling skills.
- Promote the practice-based competencies to prepare graduates to excel as entry-level practitioners and to pass the national certification examination.
- Facilitate meaningful, exceptional research while teaching critical thinking and problem solving.
- Instill the value of compassionate patient care by promoting courage, empathy, and respect of all people.
- Create an environment of mentorship that allows graduates to become successful genetic counselors who advocate for their profession and community as well as pursue scholarship activities.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

The Genetic Counseling Education Program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is housed in the College of Allied Health Professions and in partnership with the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation. A partnership was established to meet the administrative and curriculum needs of the program to provide students with a quality education in genetic counseling. The program was funded by five community partners including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, Boys Town, Children’s, Methodist Hospital, and Nebraska Medicine. Holly Zimmerman was recruited for the role of Inaugural Program Director and joined UNMC CAHP in November of 2017. An Application for Candidacy was filed with the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) in February of 2018, and a New Program Application was submitted that May. The program received New Program status from ACGC in January of 2019 just ahead of welcoming its first class of 8 students in August of 2019.

ACCREDITATION

<https://www.unmc.edu/alliedhealth/education/gc/accreditation.html>

The University of Nebraska Medical Center Genetic Counseling Education Program received Accredited New Program status in January of 2019. This designation applies to a developing program that has submitted an Accreditation Application for New Program and has undergone a successful review of the application. The 21-month program leads to a Master of Genetic Counseling degree and eligibility for board certification.

To contact ACGC, please use the contact information below:
Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling
7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 300
McLean, VA 22102



Phone: 703.506.7667
Fax: 703.506.3266
Email: info@gceducation.org
Website: www.gceducation.org

PRACTICE-BASED COMPETENCIES © 2019

Reference: https://www.gceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ACGC-Core-Competencies-Brochure_15_Web_REV-6-2019.pdf

The UNMC Genetic Counseling Education program is aligned with the ACGC Practice-Based Competencies (PBCs). The PBCs define and describe the 22 practice-based competencies that an entry-level provider must demonstrate to successfully practice as a genetic counselor. These competencies guide the education of genetic counselors and assessment of competency for practicing genetic counselors. The following five domains represent practice areas that define the activities of a genetic counselor:

Domain I: Genetics Expertise and Analysis

Domain II: Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills

Domain III: Education

Domain IV: Professional Development & Practice

Domain I: Genetics Expertise and Analysis

1. Demonstrate and utilize a depth and breadth of understanding and knowledge of genetics and genomics core concepts and principles.
2. Integrate knowledge of psychosocial aspects of conditions with a genetic component to promote client well-being.
3. Construct relevant, targeted and comprehensive personal and family histories and pedigrees.
4. Identify, assess, order, facilitate, and integrate genetic/genomic testing options in genetic counseling practice (including molecular and non-molecular testing that directly impacts assessment of inherited risk).
5. Assess individuals' and their relatives' probability of conditions with a genetic component or carrier status based on their pedigree, test result(s), and other pertinent information.
6. Demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully manage a genetic counseling case.
7. Critically assess genetic/genomic, medical and social science literature and information.

Domain II: Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills

8. Establish a mutually agreed upon genetic counseling agenda with the client.



9. Employ active listening and interviewing skills to identify, assess, and empathically respond to stated and emerging concerns.
10. Use a range of genetic counseling skills and models to facilitate informed decision-making and adaptation to genetic risks or conditions.
11. Promote client-centered, informed, non-coercive and value-based decision-making.
12. Understand how to adapt genetic counseling skills for varied service delivery models.
13. Apply genetic counseling skills in a culturally responsive and respectful manner to all clients.

Domain III: Education

14. Effectively educate clients about a wide range of genetics and genomics information based on their needs, their characteristics and the circumstances of the encounter.
15. Write concise and understandable clinical and scientific information for audiences of varying educational backgrounds.
16. Effectively give a presentation on genetics, genomics and genetic counseling issues.

Domain IV: Professional Development & Practice

17. Act in accordance with the ethical, legal and philosophical principles and values of the genetic counseling profession and the policies of one's institution or organization.
18. Demonstrate understanding of the research process.
19. Advocate for individuals, families, communities and the genetic counseling profession.
20. Demonstrate a self-reflective, evidenced-based and current approach to genetic counseling practice.
21. Understand the methods, roles and responsibilities of the process of clinical supervision of trainees.
22. Establish and maintain professional interdisciplinary relationships in both team and one-on-one settings, and recognize one's role in the larger healthcare system.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Program leadership positions include the Program Director (or Interim Director), the Assistant Program Director, and the Medical Director. The program leadership is responsible for the following:

- Maintaining program compliance with the Standards
- Designing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating program components



- Developing, reviewing and revising the program mission, goals and philosophy through strategic planning
- Developing, reviewing and overseeing the program admissions process
- Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating student clinical experiences
- Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating clinical supervisors
- Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating student didactic training
- Developing and overseeing the budget and administrative responsibilities
- Providing academic counseling of students and ensuring the availability of remedial instruction
- Ensuring program strategic planning and implementation of appropriate recommendations of the Advisory Board
- Research/capstone project coordination, monitoring and evaluation

ADVISORY BOARD

The Program Planning and Implementation (PPI) Committee serves as the advisory board for the program. This committee provides strategic direction, guides quality improvement, and assesses program effectiveness. The program was established in accordance with ACGC Standard C.1.1 and ensures the program meets and maintains accreditation standards.

COMMITTEE ROSTER

^Original members joined February 2018

Committee Member	Role/Expertise
Holly Zimmerman, MS, CGC*^ Director, Genetic Counseling Education	Committee Chair
Sara Fisher, MS, LCGC*^ Assistant Program Director Prenatal Genetic Counselor Munroe-Meyer Institute	Advisor – Prenatal Genetic Counseling, Curriculum & Clinical Rotation Committee
Omar Abdul-Rahman, MD, FACMG*^ Friedland Professor and Director of Genetic Medicine Munroe-Meyer Institute Medical Director, Genetic Counseling Education	Advisor – Clinical & Pediatric Genetics, Faculty Development
Rebecca Anderson, JD, MS, CGC^ Associate Professor College of Public Health	Advisor – Legal & Ethical issues in Genetics, Public Health
Terri Blase, MS, LCGC^ Director, Genetic Counseling Services	Advisor – Cancer Genetic Counseling, Genetic Counselor Recruitment,



Munroe-Meyer Institute	Student Admission & Retention Committee
Janice Edwards, MS, CGC Program Director, Genetic Counseling University of South Carolina	Advisor – Program Director, Genetic Counseling Education, International Genetic Counseling
Theresa Franco, MSN, RN^ Vice President Cancer Center Clinical Operations & Radiology Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center	Advisor – Program planning and implementation, Strategic Planning, Clinical Service
Jhoanna Olmos Inclusion Program Associate Office of Inclusion – Academic Affairs	Advisor – Inclusion and Diversity
Sarah McBrien, PhD Assistant Professor Director of Curriculum & Assessment	Advisor – Curricular Assessment, Research Design
Brandi Preston Founder, Kamie K. Preston Hereditary Cancer Foundation	External member Community member
Bronson Riley, MS, LCGC, CCRP^ Director of Clinical Research Southeast Nebraska Cancer Center	External member Advisor – Cancer Genetics, Clinical Research, Off Site Fieldwork Supervisor
Jennifer Sanmann, PhD, FACMG^ Director, UNMC Human Genetics Laboratory Munroe-Meyer Institute	Advisor – Molecular Genetics, Cytogenetics, Laboratory, Research, Teaching
Angela Trepanier Program Director, Genetic Counseling Wayne State Graduate School	Advisor – Program Director, Genetic Counseling Education, Holistic Admissions
Melonie Welsh^ Director Community Engagement Munroe-Meyer Institute	Advisor – Community Engagement

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Program leadership will engage three working committees to guide the program. This includes the Curriculum Committee, the Program Admissions Committee, and the Research Committee. The program director and/or assistant program director will serve on each committee. The Curriculum Committee develops didactic coursework in compliance with the practice-based competencies and ABGC Practice Analysis. The Program Admissions committee develops pre-requisite standards and metrics as well as determines desired experiences and attributes. The Program Admissions committee works closely with the CAHP Admissions Committee and the CAHP Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (EMSA) to implement and assess a holistic admissions process. The Research Committee



develops guidelines for the capstone project, generates ideas, provides student guidance, and defines grading criteria.

FACULTY ADVISING

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors serve as contacts for student questions or concerns. First year students meet twice with their advisor during the fall semester and at least once in the spring semester. Second year students meet at least once with their advisor each semester. Additional advising meetings may be recommended to support student success and professional development.

Should students have an issue regarding the program director and/or assistant director that they would like to discuss with a faculty member, they should contact the program's medical director or the CAHP Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs.

The following summarize the objectives of advising:

- Monitor student progress in coursework, fieldwork placements, and research.
- Provide guidance for academic support.
- Identify or address concerns from students or those raised by faculty members.
- Facilitate open lines of communication between supervisors and students.
- Provide the student with a confidante with whom they can discuss successes, challenges, etc.

Advisors:

- Listen to concerns related to coursework, fieldwork placements, and/or capstone project.
- Maintain professional boundaries and objectivity.
- Encourage problem solving and critical thinking.
- Stay neutral.
- Document the advisement meeting for student records.

Students:

- Meet on a regular basis.
- Be open and honest.
- Propose at least 2 potential solutions for any identified problems.

READINESS FOR GRADUATION

Second year students will meet with program leadership to discuss their readiness for graduation at least three months prior to the program completion. This meeting will



typically take place in early February of each year. Written documentation of the meeting will be provided to the student to include progress in the program with respect to curriculum, fieldwork placements, and capstone project. This meeting will also document potential outstanding issues and manage timeliness for completion. This documentation will be placed in the student's record.

BASE PAIR PROGRAM

First year students will be matched with a second year peer advisor through a program called the "Base Pair" program. The second year students provide peer insights into how to be successful as a genetic counseling student. This mentorship program is designed to be an informal, student driven experience to help students adjust to life as a genetic counseling student, discuss common professionalism topics and other issues. 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.

CURRICULUM: [Genetic Counseling < University of Nebraska Medical Center \(unmc.edu\)](https://www.unmc.edu/academic/genetic-counseling/)

WRITTEN WORK FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

All written work submitted as a hardcopy or electronically to any GC course should meet the following formatting requirements. Points may be deducted from any assignment that does not meet these requirements.

- Student Name, Due Date and Course Prefix and Number (e.g. GENC 610) should be in the upper right hand corner of the first page
- Double spaced
- 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font
- Citations should follow APA style throughout the paper
- Spelling, punctuation, and grammar should be correct
- Page numbers should be APA style (Arabic numbers at upper right hand corner of pages)
- One-inch margins should be used on all sides
- Indent the first line of every paragraph

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

All email communication between the program and students shall occur using the UNMC Outlook assigned email addresses. Students are responsible for checking their UNMC email and the Learning Management System (Canvas) on a regular basis.



STUDENT USE OF UNIVERSITY COMPUTERS & PHOTOCOPIERS

Computer clusters are available for student use on the third floor of the Michael Sorrell Center on Omaha campus. For additional information see: <https://info.unmc.edu/it/students/printing.html> Copy machines are available for student use in the McGoogan Library and Michael Sorrell Center.

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 may not provide individual copies of materials. Slides for each course may be posted on the course Canvas site with permission of the lecturer. You are not allowed to reproduce or use any slides provided in this class for your own presentations or publications without written consent from the slides 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 class.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Evaluations and stakeholder feedback are important to the UNMC Genetic Counseling Program. At the end of each semester, instructor and course evaluations are available to complete. Your responses are anonymous and voluntary. This information helps faculty gain student feedback and potentially modify the course. This information is also saved for accreditation purposes.

In addition to the formal instructor and course evaluations, we also send out a midsemester feedback survey to assess what is going well, what areas could improve, and potential topics that are unclear. Other feedback mechanisms include the Stakeholder Feedback (anonymous) survey link on the Student Canvas homepage and the specific Padlet site available to each cohort. Each year, there will be a 360 Leadership Evaluation where students are invited to provide feedback on the program director and assistant program director. Finally, our graduating students will participate in a focus group as part of their Advanced Genetic Counseling II course (GENC 711).

EVALUATION OF CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

Students will be evaluated throughout their clinical training based on expected skills during training. Please see the Cross-Rotation Objectives for more details. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate their clinical supervisor and the clinical experience.

CAPSTONE PROJECT OVERVIEW



Please see the Capstone Handbook for additional information. This session provides an overview of the Capstone Project. Students work with a faculty advisor (Capstone Chair) and committee to design a capstone experience appropriate to their educational and professional goals. Capstone planning officially begins during the Fall of the first year. The courses related to the capstone begin with CAHP 723 Principles of Critical Inquiry (2 Credit hours) and continues with GENC 720 Research Design (2 Credit hours), GENC 721 Capstone Project 1 (2 Credit hours) and GENC 722 Capstone Project II (2 credit hours).

Requirements for completion of the capstone experience include: (1) a formal written proposal submitted during the end of the first year, (2) an abstract of publishable quality submitted to College of Allied Health Professions Evidence-Based Forum with consideration of submitting to a local, regional or national meeting, (3) a poster presenting the research findings visually, (4) a written report, and (5) an oral presentation of the completed project for peers, faculty, and family members.

The capstone is a culminating experience of the Master of Genetic Counseling degree and meets requirements of the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) for Research and Scholarly Endeavors B4.3 (see below) from the Standards for Graduate Programs in Genetic Counseling Seeking Accreditation by the ACGC.

B4.3 Research and Scholarly Endeavors

B4.3.1 Programs must require that students perform research and other scholarly activities.

B4.3.2 Programs can utilize a variety of ways to meet this requirement including a formal thesis, other independent research project or capstone project.

B4.3.2 Programs should encourage and facilitate student publication of their research and scholarly endeavors

PROJECT BUDGET

The UNMC Genetic Counseling Program does not have a budget for student projects but may consider small funds on a case-by-case basis. There is no guarantee that the program will have funding to supplement any specific project, 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.

There are 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 research course director and/or program director. 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 REDCap—an online survey tool.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/code-of-conduct/>

CAHP STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Professional and ethical conduct must be shown in all relationships. Professionalism is fostered by a supportive climate emphasizing respect and dignity. The UNMC community (faculty, staff and students) should strive to create an environment characterized by

- avoidance of and no tolerance for harassment, threats, intimidations, physical, verbal, or written (including electronic) abuse;
- respect for individual and cultural differences in race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities;
- openness in communication;
- honest, respectful and fair dealing within the UNMC community, and with external customers, suppliers, competitors, and other entities;
- truthful and positive feedback with constructive, corrective feedback in a private setting whenever possible;
- assignment of duties and tasks that promote professional development;
- performance of duties and assignments in an exemplary manner;
- an emphasis on solving problems and modifying systems, not blaming people;
- no tolerance for cheating, fabricating, falsifying, plagiarizing, or inappropriately communicating research, academic, or clinical information;
- no tolerance for falsifying signatures includes signing on behalf of another where the person signing does not have delegated authority for such signature under the Board of Regents Memorandum 13 and/or 14 or other appropriately documented authorization.

PROFESSIONAL (INCLUSIVE) SPACE

The faculty of the Genetic Counseling program expect our students to demonstrate respectful language and behaviors to all people including lecturers, instructors, peers, supervisors, proctors, program leadership, health care professionals, and patients. We want our students to practice inclusive language, teamwork, excellence, accountability, and vulnerability. We want our students to be aware of the lived experiences of those involved in their education including peers and patients.

Non-professional or non-inclusive behavior will be reported to the program director who will meet with the student. Additional actions may be necessary.



NATIONAL SOCIETY OF GENETIC COUNSELING (NSGC) CODE OF ETHICS

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. 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. 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.

CAHP STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACADEMIC STANDING

https://www.unmc.edu/cahphandbook/index.php/Student_Success_and_Academic_Standing

Here are the requirements specific to the Genetic Counseling Education Program:

Program requirements for the Genetic Counseling Program:

- **Coursework:** Genetic counseling students must successfully complete all required courses with a final grade of 80% (B-) or better. A grade of 79% (C+) or less constitutes failing. For courses that are pass/fail, a student must earn a final grade of pass. The Program Director will monitor student progress.
- **Fieldwork Placements:** Genetic counseling students must successfully complete all fieldwork placements with a final grade of pass. Each of the fieldwork placement courses outline the required assignments. Students must demonstrate progression of fundamental counseling roles and practice-based competencies as evidenced by the midpoint and/or final evaluation(s). Students should accrue the recommended number of core cases and/or diversity of cases when in a practice setting with a board-certified supervisor (genetic counselor or geneticist). The Assistant Program Director will closely monitor student progress.
- **Capstone Project:** Genetic counseling students must complete all three GENC research courses that lead to the completion of a capstone project as well as any required workshops or content. Each of these courses outline the expected deliverables. Students must demonstrate progress on their project and communication with their committee. The Research course director will closely monitor student progress.

The program will request feedback from course directors, fieldwork supervisors, and research committee members to determine the overall progress of the student. The goal is to complete this



assessment around the midpoint of the semester. If a student is identified as at-risk, then the student will meet with their advisor.

What is included in the midpoint assessment?

- **Coursework:** Course directors will report if any student has scored lower than an 80% on any assessment or lower than an 80% on any assignment that counts for 15% or more of the final grade. They will also report any students who have submitted more than one late assignment.
- **Fieldwork Placements:** The Assistant Program Director (with input from fieldwork supervisors) will report if any student has not progressed in the accrual of core cases (when in a setting with a board certified supervisor), not progressed in the fundamental counseling roles or practice-based competencies, or failed to submit the assignments as required by the primary supervisor.
- **Capstone Project:** The Research Course Coordinator will report if any student has not completed tasks required for the course or not progressed in their capstone project.
- **Other:** Genetic counseling students may identify themselves as “at risk.” We may also provide feedback regarding professional (inclusive) behaviors.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled classes in the curriculum. In addition, students are expected to attend any assigned clinical observation, outside conference, and/or tumor board as assigned by the program. Students must attend all fieldwork experiences as defined by the primary fieldwork supervisor.

Students with special circumstances (i.e. previously scheduled obligation, funeral, wedding) must first submit a Request for Scheduled Absence form and then discuss with the program director as early as possible. If approved, the student is responsible for notifying the Course Director(s) and/or Fieldwork Placement Supervisors of the scheduled absence. Student is also responsible for determining how the class material or assignments can be made up. A copy of the signed excuse should be included to the course director. If a student is chronically absent, that student will be asked to meet with Program Leadership.

If there is an emergency that prevents attendance, then a student must submit an Emergency Absence Form within one week of return from the absence. If a large number of sick days are accrued in one course or fieldwork placement, the student may have to



repeat the course or fieldwork placement. The timing and location of this repeat work will be determined by according to the Student Success and Academic Standing Policy.

The Request for Scheduled Absence and Emergency Absence online forms are available in the UNMC Genetic Counseling Canvas Course.

PROGRAM MEETINGS FOR STUDENTS

In order to communicate essential information to students, Specific Class and All-Class Meetings may be required during the academic year. These meetings will be scheduled at least 1 week in advance and typically take place on Tuesdays between 12pm and 1pm.

DRESS CODE

General: According to the CAHP Professional Conduct policy, “Students are required to maintain a neat, professional appearance in all educational activities.” Each student will always wear their identification badge. Masks, protective eyewear, or other items may be required for classes and/or placements. Closely trimmed beards, sideburns, and mustaches are allowed.

Students should consider their attire if observing clinic or meeting with faculty before or after class.

Bennett Hall & Michael F. Sorrell: When taking classes in the Michael F. Sorrell Center and Bennett Hall, clothing can include a nice t-shirt, jeans, and non-athletic shorts. Shoes can include sandals and tennis shoes. Flip flops are discouraged.

Fieldwork Placements (clinics, hospitals, businesses): Students must comply with the dress code and safety requirements of the specific facility while on clinical rotations or fieldwork placements—*this includes time on site for chart review, meetings, etc.* Business casual attire is generally recommended. Unacceptable forms of dress in patient care areas include athletic wear, shorts, t-shirts, low necklines, bare backs, and sandals. Please refer to your placement supervisor for specific dress code requirements.

Failure to comply with the dress code requirements (as stated here or required by specific fieldwork placement site) may result in removal from the program activities until requirements are met.

FOOD & DRINK

Students are allowed to bring water into the classroom. A refrigerator and microwave are available in Bennett Hall on the 6th floor. Munroe Meyer Institute has a large breakroom on the 4th floor with several refrigerators and microwaves. Please make sure to mark your item(s) with your name.



Most clinical areas do not allow food or drink in patient spaces. There is typically a break room or clinical staff area where you can have a drink or small snack. Please discuss this with your supervisor.

CAHP STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Please review the CAHP Student Employment Policy:

https://www.unmc.edu/cahphandbook/index.php/Non-Academic_Policies_and_Procedures

We appreciate that everyone has unique financial responsibilities while enrolled in the program. Enrollment in the Genetic Counseling program is a full-time responsibility, and employment during the academic year may be challenging. We encourage any student with financial challenges or crisis to reach out to the program director.

CONFERRING DEGREES

https://www.unmc.edu/cahphandbook/index.php/Academic_Affairs#Requirements_for_Graduation

Completion of the Genetic Counseling program requires successful completion of all didactic courses, fieldwork placements, and capstone project requirements. Upon successful completion of the Genetic Counseling program, the student will be eligible to receive a Master of Genetic Counseling degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Granting of the degree is not contingent upon the student passing an external certification exam.

CONVOCATION & GRADUATION

Graduating students are strongly encouraged to attend the CAHP Hooding Convocation Ceremony and the UNMC Graduation Ceremony. These events typically take place the Friday and Saturday of the graduation weekend.

RETENTION OF MATERIALS

Examinations, fieldwork placement evaluations, and professional behavior evaluations are maintained by the program for a period of at least 1 term after the posting of the student's final grade report. If a grade appeal has not been filed in that time, the program may destroy the examinations and evaluations.

Student Records: Each student's online file shall contain the following while in the program (maintained by CAHP Enrollment Management and Student Affairs): 1. UNMC application form 2. Copy of official college transcripts 3. Record of transcript evaluation



Permanent Student Records: Academic transcript (maintained by the UNMC Registrar or home institution registrar) on record with legal name, grades/credits, dates of admission and completion.

Remediation plans (areas of deficiency, finalized plan, and outcome) will be stored in the secure, online shared drive for the program. Only program leadership will have access to these files. A copy of the remediation plan is provided to the student and maintained in the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Office.

Documentation related to any student withdrawal or dismissal is maintained in the online, secure shared drive for the program. Only program leadership have access to these electronic files. The CAHP Director of Student Services also maintains a copy of any documentation related to student withdrawal or dismissal. Additionally, any changes to the student's status are held with the UNMC Academic Records office (Registrar).

Documentation of any counseling reports/sessions is maintained for a minimum of two years. Each student shall have access to their records. No portion of the student's record shall be released without written approval from the student.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The program director is responsible for ongoing evaluation of the program and students. This includes internal and external curriculum validation in consultation with employers, faculty, fieldwork supervisors, students, and graduates. Program leadership will review all course evaluations. On an annual basis, aggregate data from course surveys are shared with the Program Planning and Implementation (PPI) committee and the Curriculum Committee. The latter committee will determine and/or implement curriculum modifications.

The program director and assistant program director administer the evaluation process and maintain documentation of program evaluation. Evaluation of the Genetic Counseling Program shall address the following:

- Effectiveness of the Program: The program leadership shall have a continuing system for reviewing the effectiveness of the program including a formal Self-Study process required for continuing accreditation.
- Performance of Graduates: The program evaluation shall include documentation of performance by graduates on external certification examinations, as well as, graduate and employer surveys.
- Evaluation reflected in the curriculum and overall program: The results of the program evaluation shall be documented and reflected in the curriculum and other



elements of the program. Evaluation feedback shall be obtained from students, graduates, faculty, employers of graduates, advisory groups, certification examinations, surveys, and interviews. Such outcomes assessment shall incorporate a plan for identifying areas of concern and documentation of the changes implemented to address such concerns.