



UUGPGC Student Handbook

2024 - 2025

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UUGPGC Student Handbook

Dear Genetic Counseling Student,

Welcome! The University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling (UUGPGC) is honored to have you join us for two years of exploration and growth. The fascinating profession of genetic counseling offers a myriad of opportunities in direct patient care, laboratory, research, and education and continues to expand into new areas of healthcare.

The University of Utah has a rich heritage in genetic discovery. Nobel Prize 2007 laureate Dr. Mario Capecchi characterized the University of Utah as a place where "scientists can work on long-term goals in a synergistic atmosphere of cooperation." Vizient, Inc. has rated University of Utah Health among the nation's top ten academic medical centers for quality, safety, and accountability nine of the past ten years. Recently, the 2023 US News & World Report Best Hospital Rankings listed the University of Utah Hospital as the Number 1 hospital in the state of Utah and the Salt Lake City metro area. The University of Utah's Huntsman Cancer Institute ranked in the top 35 hospitals in the country for cancer care.

Our genetic counseling program benefits from a robust multidisciplinary collaboration incorporating 67 hours of didactic, laboratory, clinical, research, and community outreach experiences to prepare our students for solid professional performance and career satisfaction.

We encourage you to keep this handbook close as a resource. Become familiar with the **Administrative Personnel** and **Faculty**. On the **Resources** page, explore the links to find what campus resources are available. Study the **Requirements** for the University of Utah MS in Genetic Counseling and ask any questions you may have. Review the many **Fieldwork** options and take ownership of your adventure in these areas. Carefully read the **Portfolio** requirements to use this tool to showcase your accomplishments during your graduate school career. Investigate the **Research** project opportunities and pursue an idea that will be educational, fulfilling, and relevant to the genetic counseling profession. Be sure to become familiar with the NSGC Code of Ethics and University **Policies and Procedures**.

In short, embrace this opportunity as an avenue to an exciting future. We are so happy to have you on board!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karin Dent".

Karin M. Dent, MS, CGC
Director, UUGPGC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannah S. Anderson".

Hannah S. Anderson, MS, CGC
Associate Director, UUGPGC

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Viskochil".

Dave Viskochil, MD, PhD
Medical Director, UUGPGC

UUGPGC PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION

The University of Utah's two-year master's degree program in Genetic Counseling integrates didactic coursework; clinical, laboratory, and industry fieldwork; supplementary community activities; and an independent research project to best prepare students for a successful career in genetic counseling. The didactic and experiential components of the UUGPGC support the development of the Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors, which are the minimal skill set of genetic counselors applied across practice settings.

The University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling housed in the University of Utah School of Medicine and Department of Human Genetics is an interdisciplinary collaboration between many University departments with participation from several local hospitals and laboratories that contribute to students' unique and rich training experiences.

The twenty-one (21) month program comprises 67 credit hours in the Department of Human Genetics. Our first class graduated in 2007, and our 18th class graduated in the spring of 2024. The UUGPGC received full accreditation (for eight years) from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) in 2022.

MISSION OF THE PROGRAM

We are a visionary, integrated team of clinicians, scientists, and educators dedicated to establishing excellence in genetic counselors through their graduate studies and beyond. We accomplish this by:

- Educating students with up-to-date information, provided by experts, using varied and evidence-based educational techniques. Beyond didactic knowledge, we seek to foster outstanding skills in communication, scholarship, research, clinical practice, and life-long learning.
- Committing ourselves to upholding a culture of belonging and for all trainees, staff, and faculty. All backgrounds are appreciated, respected, and welcomed.
- Creating a space where all students can be themselves, encouraging them to grow, and fostering an environment of collaboration, rather than competition. We value the lifelong skills of balance and self-compassion to be the best professionals we can be.

UUGPGC VALUE STATEMENT*

At the University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling, we value and support students from all backgrounds and acknowledge that the ways we converse, collaborate, and learn are impacted by our cultural and societal positions. Our community benefits when we learn from each other's unique perspectives and experiences. We are committed to fostering and maintaining a welcoming environment of belonging for all trainees, staff, and faculty. We demonstrate our commitment to these values through our admissions process, curriculum design, and support systems for all program participants.

**This statement complies with the Standards of Accreditation for Graduate Programs in Genetic Counseling requirement A3.2.3 (https://www.gceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ACGC_StandardsOfAccreditation_2023.pdf).*

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONTACT INFORMATION

	Location	Phone	E-mail
Karin M. Dent, MS, CGC; Program Director	EHSEB	801-581-8629	karin.dent@hsc.utah.edu
Hannah S. Anderson, MS, CGC; Associate Director	EHSEB	801-581-8629	hannah.anderson@hsc.utah.edu
David Viskochil, MD, Ph.D., Medical Director	Helix	801-581-8943	dave.viskochil@hsc.utah.edu
Luisa Rogers, Program Manager	EHSEB	801-581-8629	luisa.rogers@hsc.utah.edu UUGPGC@utah.edu



FACULTY

As a multidisciplinary program, we have a large, varied, and multi-talented faculty. Please see our website: <https://uugpgc.genetics.utah.edu/faculty/> for more information.

PROGRAM COMMITTEES: The program committees are the decision-making bodies of the UUGPGC. Committees are comprised of program participants with expertise in multiple settings and specialties across Utah. Current committees include Admissions, Advisory, Alum, Curriculum, Clinical Supervision/Fieldwork, Belonging and Development, Executive, Graduate Supervisory, and Research Oversight. Committee membership is by invitation only, except for the Clinical Supervision/Fieldwork Committee, which has open membership.

Executive Committee Members

Karin Dent, MS, CGC	Director, UUGPGC Professor, Department of Pediatrics
Hannah S. Anderson, MS, CGC	Associate Director, UUGPGC
Wendy Hobson-Rohrer, MD, MPH	Associate Vice President for Health Sciences Education Unit
Lynn Jorde, Ph.D.	Professor and Chair, Department of Human Genetics
David Viskochil, MD, PhD	Medical Director, UUGPGC Professor, Department of Pediatrics

Advisory Committee Members

Erin Baldwin, MS, CGC	Undiagnosed Disease Network, Genetic Counselor
Bonnie Baty, MS, CGC	Past UUGPGC Program Director, Professor Emerita
Karin M. Dent, MS, CGC	Program Director, University of Utah, Department of Pediatrics
Robin Grubs, MS, CGC	External Past Program Director, University of Pittsburgh
Hannah S. Anderson, MS, CGC	Associate Director, University of Utah, Department of Human Genetics
Wendy Hobson-Rohrer, MD, MPH	Associate Vice President for Health Sciences Education Unit, University of Utah
Sara Lamb, MD	Associate Dean of Education, University of Utah
Briana Sawyer, MS, CGC	Internal Genetic Counselor and UUGPGC Alum, Pediatric Cardiology
David Viskochil, MD, PhD	Medical Director, University of Utah, Department of Pediatrics
Holly Zimmerman, MS, CGC	Program Director, University of Nebraska Genetic Counseling Program

CALENDARS AND CURRICULUM

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

www.registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/

PROGRAM CALENDAR:

An updated program calendar is provided to students at orientation.

UUGPGC COURSES

ARUP Laboratory Fieldwork Course, H GEN 6550 (2) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

Students will have the opportunity to observe practicing genetic counselors, clinical variant scientists, and laboratory procedures including PCR, Sanger sequencing, NGS sequencing, enzyme assays, karyotyping, FISH, and SNP genomic microarray. They will get hands-on practice with karyotyping/scoping chromosomes and applying ACMG variant classification criteria to specific gene variants. Students will participate in workshops focusing on molecular genetics, biochemical genetics, cytogenetics, non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT), and maternal serum screening. They will also gain familiarity with topics that include but are not limited to mosaicism, runs of homozygosity, methylation, urea cycle disorders, organic acidurias, hemoglobinopathies, and spinal muscular atrophy. Students will review genetic test orders for appropriateness and may have the opportunity to contact a health care provider to obtain clinical information or communicate abnormal results while under the supervision of a certified genetic counselor. Finally, they will be tasked with developing and delivering case presentations.

Biochemical Genetics, H GEN 7380 (3) Prerequisite: University-level biochemistry.

This course will educate graduate students, medical students, and residents on the fundamentals of biochemical genetics. It provides an overview of biochemical pathways, the biochemical and molecular basis of inborn errors of metabolism, the mechanism of inheritance including recurrence risk, the diagnostic approach to metabolic disorders and their treatment.

Cancer Genetics, H GEN 6503 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

This hybrid course is designed to provide the fundamentals of cancer genetics and genetic counseling of hereditary cancer syndromes. Topics include cancer screening, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. The course also includes an in-depth survey of cancer genetic syndromes and techniques to conduct an appropriate cancer risk assessment for high-risk patients. Students will be expected to review lectures and complete assessments online in addition to applying learned skills to practice cases in class. Core and guest lectures will be supplemented with interactive discussions and student presentations. This course aims to provide a foundation for the genetic counseling cancer fieldwork.

Clinical Genetics Across the Lifespan, H GEN 6470 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

This course consists of a series of lectures on a wide variety of genetic disorders, their natural history, available treatment, and inheritance patterns. The application of the medical and genetic information to genetic counseling with families will be emphasized.

Counseling Skills & Process, H GEN, 6211 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students. Cross Listed with ED PS 6210

Basic interviewing and counseling skills, relationship skills, formulation of counseling objectives, and modes of intervention. Pre-practicum experience to prepare students to work with clients.

Ethical and Legal Issues in Human Genetics, H GEN 6700 (2) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

This course is designed to engage students in emerging ethical, legal, and social issues facing the use and practice of genetics in medicine. The course offers a mix of didactic content, case studies, and class discussion.

Genetic Counseling Research, H GEN 6900 (1-3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

Independent research for genetic counseling students. Students will be evaluated on the quality and timeliness of their research project, including the research proposal, research in progress, and research defense presentations in the first and second years. To receive credit and graduate from the UUGPGC, students must follow the research syllabus guidelines and complete all requirements.

Genetic Counseling Seminar I: Principles of Genetic Counseling, H GEN 6420 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the principles of genetic counseling. The course develops clinical and psychosocial genetic counseling skills through a variety of methods including lectures, role-plays, and practice genetic counseling sessions with simulated patients. The course also covers the history of genetic counseling and clinical genetics, teaches basic competencies in genetic counseling, explores community experiences with genetic conditions, and provides instruction in the genetic counseling process, pedigree analysis, the impact of genetic conditions and disabilities, public health influences in clinical genetics, and psychosocial aspects of genetic counseling.

Genetic Counseling Seminar II, H GEN 6430 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

The purpose of this course is to continue building the psychosocial counseling concepts and skills introduced the previous semester and expand knowledge of genetic counseling concepts, clinical tools, delivering difficult news, and professional opportunities and responsibilities. The course continues with class discussions, lectures, role-plays, critical thinking exercises, and work with simulated patients in developing advanced psychosocial counseling skills with opportunities to demonstrate the diversity in competency in psychosocial interactions with clients.

Genetic Counseling Seminar III, H GEN 6440 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

This course promotes genetic counseling students continued professional and psychosocial development. It provides students with opportunities to develop skills to perform well in job searches and interviews, to effectively present information verbally and in writing to a wide variety of audiences, and to gain exposure to different models of service delivery. It also provides a forum to learn from difficult cases, increase clinically useful knowledge and skills, synthesize community activities, explore negotiation techniques, and expand knowledge and use of genetic resources.

Genetic Counseling Seminar IV, H GEN 6450 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

This course promotes genetic counseling students continued professional and psychosocial development as they prepare to enter the professional workforce. It provides students with skills to perform well in their first professional position, deliver effective oral presentations, pursue lifelong learning, apply multicultural skills to genetic counseling situations, explore public health topics in genetics, learn from difficult cases, and explore economic issues in genetics. Students will understand the ABGC certification process and develop skills to improve their performance on the ABGC certification examination.

Genetic Counseling Thesis Research, H GEN 6970 (1-15) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only. Independent master's thesis research for genetic counseling students.

Human Genetics, H GEN 6500 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

This course covers topics related to human genetics and the mechanisms of gene and cellular regulation, DNA structure, genes and mutations, basic cytogenetics, population genetics, immunogenetics, and risk analysis.

Perinatal Genetics, H GEN 6300 (3) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

This course offers fundamentals of perinatal genetics for genetic counseling students prior to clinical fieldwork. Provides an overview of topics in perinatal genetics including management of normal and complicated pregnancy, genetic screening, prenatal diagnostic techniques and indications, teratogens, and infertility. Covers the diagnosis and management of pregnancies complicated by maternal and fetal genetic disease, fetal anomalies, and pregnancy loss as well as reproductive options such as pregnancy termination. Core and guest lectures are supplemented with interactive discussions and student presentations.

Pregnancy Risk Line/Mother to Baby & Myriad Genetics Fieldwork, H GEN 6800 (2) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

At MotherToBaby UT, students will expand their knowledge of clinical teratology with the goal of having a foundation of teratology counseling to provide exposure information to clients in a subsequent perinatal fieldwork. Course topics include principles of teratology and pharmacology, congenital anomalies, known teratogens, client counseling, lactation, substances of abuse, maternal depression, herbal medications, and occupational/environmental exposures. Students will engage in

readings, lectures, exposure reviews, group discussions, teratology call observation, and case conferences.

At Myriad Genetic Laboratories, students will learn about the different roles that genetic counselors can assume in a commercial laboratory setting. Course topics include variant classification, review of genetic testing technology, review of interesting cases, and discussion of Myriad products. Students will participate in lectures, group discussions, scientific article review, and on-call observations.

Practical Applications of Clinical Genetics, H GEN 6410 (2) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students or permission of instructor.

This course will focus on the practical application of critical information that is presented in the Clinical Genetics Across the Lifespan course. Students will participate in class discussions, case review, presentations, and other activities to support critical thinking and application of clinical genetics concepts. Genetic counseling skills will also be emphasized throughout the course. Pre-recorded lectures may be included in this course, as well as invited speakers, or families, to give more depth of knowledge regarding the lived experiences of individuals with genetic conditions.

Professional Development in Genetic Counseling, H GEN 6400 (1 fall, 3 spring) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

The fall course covers the basic principles of public health, epidemiology and statistics, from a clinical and historical perspective. It will enable the student to understand research methodologies and gain the ability to evaluate and present literature relevant to clinical practice and research. They will discuss how the clinical and historical perspectives of research intersect with the role of the genetic counselor in the current healthcare system. Prerequisite: University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling (UUGPGC) students or permission of instructor; undergraduate course in genetics.

The spring course consists of experiences in clinical genetics, professional development in genetic counseling, and opportunities to increase genetic counseling-specific cultural awareness. It includes online course work, participation in clinical fieldwork, and seminars with other health care providers; clinical research coordinators; interviews with families; reviews of ACMG policy statements; and journal entries for these experiences.

Research Methods for Genetic Counseling Students, H GEN 6820 (1) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

This course is tailored to address the skills genetic counseling students need to complete their graduate research project requirement successfully. Topics covered include qualitative research methods, informed consent, IRB applications, and research presentations. This course will enable the student to understand research methodologies, apply learned skills to develop their research, and provide a basis for critical review of medical literature.

Supervised Fieldwork in Genetic Counseling, H GEN 6850 (0.5-6.0) Prerequisite: Genetic counseling students only.

Students will participate in genetic Counseling fieldwork in settings such as adult genetics, general genetics, metabolic genetics, perinatal genetics, pediatric genetics, cancer genetics, and specialty clinics. Genetic counseling students are required to successfully complete fieldwork

placements, generally consisting of six (6) fieldwork of six (6) weeks in length. One of these fieldwork placements may also include research activities. In non-elective clinical fieldwork placements, students will practice genetic counseling skills under the supervision of board-certified genetics professionals.

Journal Club

Genetic Counseling Journal Club will introduce genetic counseling students to the process of evaluating and presenting literature relevant to clinical practice and research. Information about the identification and detection of genetic disorders, clinical phenotypes and natural history associated with conditions, optimal medical management, outcome data, and genetic service models is being published at a breakneck pace. The ability to critically analyze and present this literature among colleagues and to apply the information clinically have become key competencies as genetic counselors strive to establish themselves as experts in the translation of new technologies into clinical practice. Journal Club will meet three to four times annually. Both 1st and 2nd-year students will participate along with faculty facilitators. Other guests and/or program faculty members may be invited to participate and present articles.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbook requirements are subject to change. Upon admission, students are provided with updated textbook requirements.



UUGPGC COURSEWORK

Semester	Name of Course	Course #	Credits	Instructor(s)
Fall 2024 16 cr	Biochemical Genetics	H GEN 7380	3	M. Pasquali B. Shayota
	Professional Development in Genetic Counseling	H GEN 6400	1	H. Anderson
	Counseling Skills & Process	H GEN 6211-002	3	N. Noel
	Genetic Counseling Seminar I: Principles of Genetic Counseling	H GEN 6420	3	K. Dent J. Palumbos
	Human Genetics	H GEN 6500	3	H. Anderson D. Viskochil
	Perinatal Genetics	H GEN 6300	3	A. Phillips M. Saich
	Embryology Certificate (University of Cincinnati)	<i>online</i>	0	
Spring 2025 15 cr	Cancer Genetics	H GEN 6503	3	W. Espinel K. Pauley
	Clinical Genetics Across the Lifespan	H GEN 6470	3	H. Anderson D. Viskochil
	Genetic Counseling Seminar II: Psychosocial Genetic Counseling	H GEN 6430	3	M. Emmerson J. Palumbos
	Practical Applications of Clinical Genetics	H GEN 6410	2	L. Meyers B. Sawyer
	Professional Development in Genetic Counseling	H GEN 6400	3	K. Dent D. Viskochil
	Research Methods for Genetic Counseling Students	H GEN 6820	1	H. Anderson K. Dent
Summer 2025 9 cr	Genetic Counseling Research	H GEN 6900 or 6970*	2	K. Dent D. Viskochil
	ARUP Laboratory Fieldwork Course	H GEN 6550	2	M. Bosworth
	Pregnancy Risk Line/Myriad Genetics Fieldwork	H GEN 6800	2	A. Romeo S. San Roman
	Supervised Fieldwork in Genetic Counseling	H GEN 6850	3	H. Anderson K. Dent
Fall 2025 13.5 cr	Genetic Counseling Seminar III	H GEN 6440	3	K. Dent M. Emmerson
	Genetic Counseling Research	H GEN 6900 or 6970*	3	K. Dent D. Viskochil
	Supervised Fieldwork in Genetic Counseling, Sections 1 - 3	H GEN 6850	7.5	H. Anderson K. Dent
Spring 2026 13.5 cr	Genetic Counseling Seminar IV	H GEN 6450	3	K. Dent
	Ethical and Legal Issues in Human Genetics	H GEN 6700	2	M. Kilbride
	Genetic Counseling Research	H GEN 6900 or 6970	1	K. Dent D. Viskochil
	Supervised Fieldwork in Genetic Counseling, Sections 1 - 3	H GEN 6850	7.5	H. Anderson K. Dent

Total credits: 31 credits 1st year + 9 credits summer + 27 credits 2nd year = 67 credits

* If completing a formal thesis

FIELDWORK: CLINICAL and NON-CLINICAL

Genetic counseling students are required to complete six six-week fieldwork placements. Students will participate in fieldwork in general/pediatric or pediatric cardiology genetics, perinatal genetics, cancer genetics, specialty clinics, and an elective fieldwork setting. The elective fieldwork placements may be in one or more clinical, research, or other non-clinical setting. Students will practice genetic counseling skills under the supervision of board-certified Genetic Counselors in fieldwork placements.

First-year students are assigned clinical experiences in general, perinatal, cancer genetics, and specialty clinics—these range from observational experiences to participatory experiences. In addition, first-year students must attend at least 50% of Medical Genetics Case Management Conferences (CMC). The CMC is a weekly conference that reviews cases seen in the Medical Genetics Clinics with digital photos and/or imaging studies of most patients. A clinical geneticist holds weekly sessions in the first semester to help students learn the terminology and common syndromes discussed in CMC. For up to half of these, students may substitute attendance at another conference (such as tumor boards at HCI or Intermountain) approved by UUGPGC leadership. The Perinatal Genetics course requires first-year students to attend Prenatal Conference, a monthly conference that reviews prenatal cases, during their first semester.

Second-year students will have a block of fieldwork in the laboratory, industry, and teratology settings in the first six weeks of the summer semester. The first week is in teratology at the Pregnancy Risk Line /Mother to Baby, the next three weeks are at ARUP Laboratories, and the last two weeks are at Myriad Genetics.

Starting in the second half of the summer, second-year students begin rotating through the following **required** fieldwork Placements. A schematic representation of the fieldwork placements is included below.

- Three, six -week perinatal, pediatrics, and cancer fieldwork placements:
 - The Perinatal genetics clinical placement is six weeks in length and is conducted at either the University of Utah or Intermountain.
 - The Pediatrics genetics fieldwork is based in Pediatric Genetics at the University of Utah or in Pediatric Cardiology fieldwork at Primary Children's Hospital. This fieldwork includes General Genetics Clinics at Primary Children's Eccles Outpatient facility and the Lehi Primary Children's Outpatient Clinic, Hearing Assessment Clinic at Primary Children's Hospital, Genetic Counseling Clinic, and other activities such as the inpatient consult service, general genetics outreach clinics, and specialty clinics that serve families with specific conditions (e.g. Neurofibromatosis clinic, Skeletal Dysplasia clinic, Prader-Willi Clinic Tuberous Sclerosis Clinic, etc.).
 - Each student also conducts one six-week Cancer genetics fieldwork placement at Huntsman Cancer Institute, Intermountain Medical Center, or St. Mark's Cancer Genetics Program.

- Two Specialty Clinic Fieldwork Placements (six weeks each)
 - Specialty settings include Metabolic Genetics; Adult Cardiology (two locations); Neurology (Pediatric & Adult); Ophthalmology; Newborn Screening; V.A./Genome Medical Services (telehealth); Pediatric Oncology; Undiagnosed Diseases Network; Genome Medical; and many others.
 - Students may substitute another clinical fieldwork placement instead of those listed above (e.g., a summer clinical fieldwork outside Utah in a mixed patient population, a second prenatal placement in a different setting, etc.).

- Elective Fieldwork (six weeks): The elective fieldwork placement is a student-designed fieldwork experience that may be scheduled in one block (six weeks) or two blocks of three weeks each:
 - Students may choose to do a clinical or non-clinical fieldwork placement at the University of Utah or another local healthcare facility or in an industry, laboratory, and/or research setting. Elective placements must be approved by the program director.
 - Many students also conduct their elective placement at a mixture of locations. A list of previous elective fieldwork is available to students.

Sample Fieldwork Schematic:

		Fall			Spring		
		Summer	Fall 1	Fall 2	Fall 3 - Spring 1	Spring 2	Spring 3
Students / Dates	Adult Neuro	IMC Prenatal	Pediatrics	IMC Cancer	Color	Elective	
	Peds Neuro	HCI	Elective	Nb Screening	U U Prenatal	Peds Cardio	
	IMC Cancer	Lab S	Pediatrics	IMC Prenatal	Peds inpatient	Elective	
	U U Prenatal	ARUP/prenatal	Peds Neuro	St. Mark's Cancer	Elective	Pediatrics	
	Peds Cardio	U U Prenatal	VA	Adult neuro	HCI	Elective	
	Lab S	IMC Cancer	IMC Prenatal	Elective	Pediatrics	NbScreening	
	Pediatrics	Elective	UDN/Metabolic	HCI	IMC Prenatal	Peds Onc	
	VA	Peds Cardio	Elective	nt SP prenatal	Genome Medical	HCI	
	External Cancer	Pediatrics	Genome Medical	Elective	Nb Screening	U U Prenatal	
	HCI	Peds Onc	Peds Cardio	nt SP prenatal	UDN/Metabolic	Elective	

Portfolio Contents and Tracking

1. Each student will keep an e-portfolio to document their UUGPGC experiences. The portfolio should be stored on a computer **with adequate backup**. The complete e-portfolio is required for graduation. Students may wish to use their portfolio for job interviews or other purposes.
2. The portfolio should contain an Excel **Clinical Case Spreadsheet** with a list of all cases seen. As a requirement for graduation, the spreadsheet will include:
 - a minimum of 50 required Participatory cases
 - 25 additional Participatory / Other cases
 - all observational cases.

Fieldwork Placement Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by their fieldwork supervisors on the development and improvement of their skills in genetic counseling activities, including the practice based-competencies (or the progress of their research for a research placement), completion of all required tasks promptly, their ability to maintain appropriate workplace conduct, meeting fieldwork objectives, and adherence to the written requirements of the placement. Students will also conduct self-evaluations of their progress and performance throughout each fieldwork placement.

Supervisors complete a student evaluation at the mid and endpoints of each fieldwork placement and meet with students to discuss their evaluations and set goals for the second half of the placement or the next placement. Evaluations are based on consistent criteria and

consider practice-based competency developmental goals (see Cross-Fieldwork Objectives, provided to enrolled students).

Fieldwork Placements (H GEN 6850) are graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students failing a placement may be subject to dismissal from the Program and, if allowed to remain in the Program, are required to complete an additional equivalent placement.

Students are required to evaluate each fieldwork setting. These evaluations should be presented to the fieldwork supervisor at the final meeting. Students also have the opportunity each semester to anonymously evaluate placements through the course evaluation for *Supervised Fieldwork placements in Genetic Counseling*. The evaluations are collated at the end of the year and distributed to the relevant program faculty to facilitate improvement in supervisory skills. Both supervisors and students are encouraged to give respectful, constructive feedback.

Many UUGPGC supervisors belong to the Clinical Supervision/Fieldwork Committee which meets periodically for planning, education about teaching and supervisory skills, and to provide a forum to monitor student progress and troubleshoot problems with fieldwork placements.



RESEARCH PROJECT

The University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling requires the satisfactory completion of a research experience that can be either an independent research project or a thesis.

The goals of the research experience are for GC students to:

- design and implement a research project,
- carry out the institutional requirements for research,
- develop research questions, analyze data, and interpret results,
- deliver oral presentations of the research study,
- demonstrate the basic skills and knowledge required to be involved in research,
- critically appraise research results,
- interface knowledgeably with investigators,
- establish and maintain a professional relationship with committee members,
- create a journal-ready manuscript, and
- communicate plans for submission of the manuscript.

Research Project Guidelines:

Genetic counseling students should choose a research project that analyzes primary or secondary data sets in an innovative way. A primary data set is one generated by the genetic counseling student while executing the research project, whereas a secondary data set was previously generated by another investigator to which the genetic counseling student has been permitted access.

Research topics may include investigations of the psychological, biological, sociological, political and/or ethical aspects of genetic disease/birth defects, professional topics or issues in genetic counseling, etc., and the research may be conducted in a clinical, laboratory, and/or community setting. Literature reviews, case reports, and designing or implementing patient, professional, and community education programs are not acceptable research projects.

Alternatively, students can elect to do a **formal master's thesis**. Such students would register for research credits using HGEN 6970 and must adhere to University of Utah thesis guidelines. This includes the composition of the student research committee, guidelines for the format of the written thesis manuscript, and approval of the final manuscript by the University thesis editor:

<https://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/thesis-and-dissertation-regulations/>

REQUIREMENTS FOR MS IN GENETIC COUNSELING (UUGPGC Class of 2026)

1. Students must meet the general requirements for a 'Master's degree at the University of Utah (<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/degree-requirements/>)
2. Students must complete a minimum of 67 graduate credit hours (5000 level or above) with a grade of B or higher (or pass if the course is only offered on a pass/fail basis), with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
3. Students must complete the curriculum of the Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling with a grade of B or higher in all courses with letter grades.
4. Obtaining a grade of less than B in two courses will be grounds for dismissal from the Program.
5. Fieldwork Placements (rotations) will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students failing a fieldwork placement must repeat and pass the equivalent placement in order to graduate. Students must submit electronic forms of all fieldwork evaluations, signed fieldwork placement spreadsheets (when applicable), and logbook/case examples to the program director for the student e-file.
6. The Program includes one elective fieldwork placement that must be approved by the program director. A signed e-copy of the elective fieldwork contract must be submitted to the program director before the commencement of the placement.
7. While they are in the Program, students must complete a minimum of 50 clinical cases that meet ACGC logbook criteria for Participatory cases and 25 additional cases that meet Participatory or Other case criteria.
8. Students must register for and pass at least 6 research credits and complete a thesis or independent research project. The student must have a research plan approved by the Research Oversight Committee, and the 'student's individual committee must approve the final research product and presentation.
9. Students must submit a **final copy** to the program director of the research paper approved by the 'student's research committee.
10. Students must attend and participate in all student Journal Club meetings each year unless they have an excused absence.
11. Students must attend a minimum of six (6) or 50% of Medical Genetics Case Management Conferences, whichever is greater, or other approved conferences during the first two semesters. They may trade out up to half with other approved conferences.
12. Students must complete a portfolio that meets the standards outlined in the document *Portfolio Contents*. Students must submit an **e-copy** of all parts of the portfolio to the program

director, including a final copy of the research paper approved by the ' 'student's research committee, a cumulative spreadsheet with all cases, a spreadsheet of the ACGC required 50 Participatory cases (by specialty), and signed copies of all completed evaluations of the student and the fieldwork placement sites from the case log system.

13. Students must read the UUGPGC Student Handbook.
14. Students must comply with the University of Utah Student Code of Rights & Responsibilities (<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).
15. Students must demonstrate appropriate and respectful workplace etiquette and are expected to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, members of the healthcare team, and program personnel.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH STUDENT CODE OF RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES – POLICY 6-400

<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

The purposes of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities are to set forth the specific authority and responsibility of the University to maintain social discipline, to establish guidelines that facilitate a just and civil campus community, and to outline the educational process for determining student and student organization responsibility for alleged violations of University regulations. University policies are designed to protect individuals and the campus community and create an environment conducive to achieving the academic mission of the institution. The University encourages informal resolution of problems, and students are urged to discuss their concerns with the involved faculty member, department chair, dean of the college or dean of students. Informal resolution of problems by mutual consent of all parties is highly desired and is appropriate at any time.

Academic Standing (minimum GPA)

Candidates for graduate degrees in the genetic counseling program must maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA in coursework counted toward the degree. Students should obtain a "B" in all program courses and "CR" in all fieldwork placements. A student failing to earn at least a "B" for a credit course may be required to retake the course and be placed on academic probation or dismissed from the Program. A student receiving an "NC" in a fieldwork placement may be required to repeat a placement in the same specialty and may be placed on academic probation or dismissed from the Program. Students receiving less than a "B" or "CR" in more than one course or fieldwork placement during a semester may be subject to dismissal. A student failing to achieve "B" or "CR" in a course twice may be subject to dismissal. In general, a student's retention in the genetic counseling graduate program is contingent on the faculty's belief that the student is likely to complete the Program successfully and practice as a competent and professional genetic counselor.

Remediation

Remediation is a valuable learning tool. Our Program is fully invested in your success both as a student and a consummate professional. Students and faculty work together to identify knowledge deficits accurately and improve clinical skills and competency early. As part of that process, we assist students in developing learning strategies and skills for success. We view each student as an individual and strive to provide an environment of personal and educational growth. Issues in these areas are identified, and plans are implemented to strengthen those areas where a student may need to work on critical thinking, accountability, responsibility, communication, or teamwork.

Dismissal Policy

While most students succeed in our Program, there are situations where a student's performance, in the professional opinion of the faculty, indicates an inability to successfully complete the Program. In such circumstances, a student may be dismissed from the Program. These circumstances may include:

- Obtaining a grade of less than B (including a failure in a pass/fail class) in two courses
- GPA (either cumulatively or in a particular semester) of less than 3.0
- Failure to timely and satisfactorily complete fieldwork, coursework, or research projects
- Failure to learn and adhere to the NSGC Code of Ethics
- Failure to attend Journal Club or required Conferences
- Failure to make timely progress toward completion of the master's degree as determined by the student's research committee and Program Directors
- Behavioral, academic, or scientific misconduct.

Dismissal of a student from the Program will be carried out in compliance with University of Utah Policy 6-400.

Graduate student performance is evaluated each semester by the Program Directorship. These are formal reviews of student progress and if there are any issues regarding continuation in the Program, these issues will be discussed and documented during the meeting. Students are expected to make satisfactory progress; it is expected that this progress will be documented by the Program Directors. Academic actions, including dismissal from the Program, are possible outcomes for graduate students deemed not to be making satisfactory progress. The UUGPGC Executive Committee, Program Directors, or individual faculty, requesting through the Office of Graduate Studies, may initiate dismissal processes of a student from the Program and the Graduate School for failure to meet the academic requirements of the Program. Students may also be disciplined, including dismissed from the Program, for engaging in behavioral, academic or professional misconduct. (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

Time Limit to Degree & Continuous Registration

The genetic counseling graduate program is designed for completion in five semesters and, absent extenuating circumstances, students are expected to complete the Program in this time period. Occasionally, students may have health, family issues or other circumstances that delay their completion within five semesters. The program directors are anxious to work with students to accomplish that completion and successful graduation. Non-thesis **candidates must be registered for at least one course per semester from the time of formal admission to a graduate degree program until all requirements for the degree, including the defense of the final project, paper, or final examination, are completed.** Thesis and non-thesis candidates must meet this registration requirement unless they have an official leave of absence. See Minimum Continuous Registration

and Leaves of Absence elsewhere in this section of the graduate school catalog <http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/>. Failure to make sustained academic progress is grounds for dismissal from the Program.

Students Wishing to Leave the Graduate Program

Students should contact the Program Director as early as possible if they are considering leaving the graduate program. The timing of a student's departure from the Program impacts whether tuition must be reimbursed and eligibility for a degree. Reimbursement for tuition is delineated on the description of the Tuition Benefit Plan on the Graduate School website:

""IMPORTANT: Students adding and/or dropping courses after the semester's published add/drop deadlines are responsible for any and all charges incurred, including withdrawals. Tuition benefit will not pay for withdrawn credit hours, and if registration falls below nine credit hours at any time during the semester, a student becomes ineligible for TBP participation and will be billed the full tuition for that semester.

Students will not earn and receive a master's degree if the Graduate School and UUGPGC requirements have not been met when they leave the graduate program. As such, students are advised to discuss degree requirements with the Program Directors by requesting a special interview before they consider leaving the graduate program. The student should recognize that they would be required to re-apply should they wish to continue in the Program and work on another advanced degree.

Termination of Student-Research Committee Chair/Committee Relationship:

The following guidelines have been approved by the UUGPGC Program Directors for the rare occasions when it becomes necessary to terminate a graduate student-research committee relationship.

Either the graduate student or the research committee chair may terminate a student/research chair relationship because of dissatisfaction. It is important that both parties respect the needs of the other. The following guidelines are designed to help accomplish this.

If a research committee chair is dissatisfied with the research effort of a student, the chair should make every effort at an early stage of the dissatisfaction to communicate to the student the concerns they may have about the quality of research performance and document this communication. If the deficiencies persist, the chair should identify with input from the research committee, in writing to the student, and copied to the program director, the unsatisfactory aspects of the student's research performance, and allow the student a reasonable time (at least 30 days from when the student receives the letter) to correct the deficiencies. If the deficiencies are corrected within the agreed upon probation period, the program director and committee chair should notify the student in writing that they are no longer on probation (and a copy of the letter will be stored in the student's file).

If the deficiencies persist at the end of the student's formal probationary period, it is the prerogative of the research committee chair to terminate the student-chair research relationship.

A student who wants to leave a research group should give the research chair 30 days written notice outlining the reasons for leaving the group. During the 30 days, the research work should be brought to a point where it could be easily passed on to a new person. All notebooks and data should be returned to the research chair before the student begins another research project.

Medical Leave/Family Leave Policy

General graduate student leave request form (https://registrar.utah.edu/_pdf/graduate-leave-absence.pdf)

1. Graduate students may request up to one year of leave (uncompensated) for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Serious health condition of student or family member
 - b. Parental leave
 - c. Military service
 - d. Other compelling reason, with permission of the Department.
2. This leave requires that a student submit a leave request form signed by the ' 'student's committee chair and department head or director of graduate studies.

National Society of Genetic Counselors CODE of ETHICS

To ensure that the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct are promoted and supported at the University, **students must adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing**, as adopted or recognized as authoritative by the relevant academic Program. Student Code: Section VI: Student Professional and Ethical Conduct, A. Standards of Professional Conduct.

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. While attending the University of Utah, students are held to the ethical standards for the profession for which he/s he is preparing. Therefore, genetic counseling graduate students must adhere to the NSGC Code of Ethics. <https://www.nsgc.org/Policy-Research-and-Publications/Code-of-Ethics-Conflict-of-Interest>

Students who demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to comply with the professional standards may be subject to academic dismissal from the Program (Policy 6-400, Section IV). Students who engage in egregious violations of the professional standards may also be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the Program. (Policy 6-400, Section VI).

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. Through this code of ethics, the NSGC affirms the ethical responsibilities of its members. NSGC members are expected to be aware of the ethical implications of their professional actions and work to uphold and adhere to the guidelines and principles set forth in this code. (<https://www.nsgc.org/Policy-Research-and-Publications/Code-of-Ethics-Conflict-of-Interest>)

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 are best served. The NSGC Code of Ethics is based upon the distinct relationships genetic counselors have with 1) themselves, 2) their clients, 3) their colleagues, and 4) society. Each section of this code begins with an explanation of the relevant relationship, along with the key values and characteristics of that relationship. These values are drawn from the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, and they include the professional principles of fidelity, veracity, integrity, dignity and accountability.

No set of guidelines can provide all the assistance needed in every situation, especially when different values appear to conflict. In certain areas, some ambiguity remains, allowing for the judgment of the genetic counselor(s) involved to determine how best to respond to difficult situations.

Section I: Genetic Counselors Themselves

Genetic counselors value professionalism, competence, integrity, objectivity, veracity, dignity, accountability and self-respect in themselves as well as in each other. Therefore, genetic counselors work to:

1. Seek out and acquire balanced, accurate and relevant information required for a given situation.
2. Continue their education and training to keep abreast of relevant guidelines, regulations, position statements, and standards of genetic counseling practice.
3. Work within their scope of professional practice and recognize the limits of their own knowledge, expertise, and competence.
4. Accurately represent their experience, competence, and credentials, including academic degrees, certification, licensure, and relevant training.
5. Identify and adhere to institutional and professional conflict of interest guidelines and develop mechanisms for avoiding or managing real or perceived conflict of interest when it arises
6. Acknowledge and disclose to relevant parties the circumstances that may interfere with or influence professional judgment or objectivity or may otherwise result in a real or perceived conflict of interest.
7. Assure that institutional or professional privilege is not used for personal gain.
8. Be responsible for their own physical and emotional health as it impacts their professional judgment and performance, including seeking professional support, as needed.

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 in clinical and research interactions. Therefore, genetic counselors work to:

1. Provide genetic counseling services to their clients within their scope of practice regardless of personal interests or biases, and refer clients, as needed, to appropriately qualified professionals.
2. Clarify and define their professional role(s) and relationships with clients, disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest, and provide an accurate description of their services.
3. Provide genetic counseling services to their clients regardless of their clients' abilities, age, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity.
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. Respect their clients' beliefs, inclinations, circumstances, feelings, family relationships, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, and cultural traditions.
6. Refer clients to an alternate genetic counselor or other qualified professional when situations arise in which a genetic counselor's personal values, attitudes and beliefs may impede his or her ability to counsel a client.
7. Maintain the privacy and security of their client's confidential information and individually identifiable health information, unless released by the client or disclosure is required by law.
8. Avoid the exploitation of their clients for personal, professional, or institutional advantage, profit or interest.

Section III: Genetic Counselors and Their Colleagues

The genetic counselors professional relationships with other genetic counselors, trainees, employees, employers and other professionals are based on mutual respect, caring, collaboration, fidelity, veracity and support. Therefore, genetic counselors work to:

1. Share their knowledge and provide mentorship and guidance for the professional development of other genetic counselors, employees, trainees and colleagues.
2. Respect and value the knowledge, perspectives, contributions, and areas of competence of colleagues, trainees and other professionals.
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 boundaries to avoid exploitation in their relationships with trainees, employees, employers and colleagues.
6. Take responsibility and credit only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed
7. Appropriately acknowledge the work and contributions of others.
8. Make employers aware of genetic counselors ethical obligations as set forth in the NSGC Code of Ethics.

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 genetic services and health care. These relationships are based on the principles of veracity, objectivity and integrity. Therefore, genetic counselors, individually or through their professional organizations, work to:

1. Promote policies that aim to prevent genetic discrimination and oppose the use of genetic information as a basis for discrimination.
2. Serve as a source of reliable information and expert opinion on genetic counseling to employers, policymakers, payers, and public officials. When speaking publicly on such matters, a genetic counselor should be careful to separate their personal statements and

opinions made as private individuals from statements made on behalf of their employers or professional societies.

3. Participate in educating the public about the development and application of technological and scientific advances in genetics and the potential societal impact of these advances.
4. Promote policies that assure ethically responsible research in the context of genetics.
5. Adhere to applicable laws and regulations. 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.; Revised 12/04, 1/06, 4/17

PROGRAM ON-BOARDING

Immunizations

Students must provide proof of immunizations or scheduled immunizations through University Student Health. Yearly flu vaccination documentation must be submitted in the fall when vaccination is completed.

Background Check/Drug Testing

Background checks are contracted through PreCheck. Details provided upon student enrollment.

Social Media Guidelines

While social media is a primary source for many connections now, please do not ask to "friend" or "follow" administrators and faculty from the Program until after graduation. This allows all program participants to maintain a professional environment during your education. We encourage students to lock all social media accounts or make them private.

Also, please bear in mind the following:

- Be transparent
- Be honest
- Be professional – when in doubt, do not post
- Post accurate, useful information
- Be respectful of persons, entities and copyright laws
- Protect confidentiality
- Be courteous and considerate.

Dress Expectations

Students of the University of Utah Health programs are expected to present themselves and their Program in a clean, appropriate manner to help patients and employees feel safe, confident, and comfortable in any patient care area, including the entrance to any unit or clinic, examination rooms, patient rooms, and reception/waiting areas. Different fieldwork placements may provide their dress expectations to students.

Student name badges should be worn above the bottom of the sternum at eye level and free from any stickers, pins, etc. Name and photo should be legible and visible at all times.

Current and detailed dress expectation information is provided to students upon enrollment.

RESOURCES

Campus Safety **

<https://safeu.utah.edu>

Career and Professional Development Center

<https://careers.utah.edu>

Center for Cultural and Community Engagement

<https://culture.utah.edu/>

Center for Student Wellness

<http://wellness.utah.edu>

Center for Student Access & Resources

<https://studentresources.utah.edu/>

Department of Human Genetics

<http://genetics.utah.edu>

Graduate School

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/>

Graduate Students

<https://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-students/>

Maps

<https://www.utah.edu/printable-maps/>

Registrar's Office

<http://registrar.utah.edu>

The Student Code

<https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

The Student Handbook

<https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/>

Student Health Center

<http://studenthealth.utah.edu>

Student Services

<https://www.utah.edu/students/services.php>

Student Support Services

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-student-support-services/>



Tuition Expenses

<http://fbs.admin.utah.edu/income/>

University Counseling Center

<http://counselingcenter.utah.edu>

University of Utah Graduate Program in Genetic Counseling

<http://uugpgc.genetics.utah.edu/>

**** Safety and Wellness**

Your safety is our top priority. In an emergency, dial 911 or seek a nearby emergency phone (throughout campus). Report any crimes or suspicious people to 801-585-COPS; this number will get you to a dispatch officer at the University of Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS; dps.utah.edu). If at any time, you would like to be escorted by a security officer to or from areas on campus, DPS will help — just give a call.

The University of Utah seeks to provide a safe and healthy experience for students, employees, and others who make use of campus facilities. In support for this goal, the University has established confidential resources and support services to assist students who may have been affected by harassment, abusive relationships, or sexual misconduct.

Your well-being is key to your personal safety. **If you are in crisis, call 801-587-3000**; help is close.

Thank you!

