

*Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences*  
*MS Genetic Counseling*

**2023-2024**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**



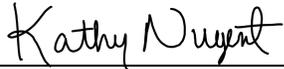
**UAB SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC SCIENCES**  
**GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAM**  
**2023-2024 ACADEMIC HANDBOOK**



June 7, 2023

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06/08/2023

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07/07/2023

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Andrew Butler, Dean  
School of Health Professions

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## INTRODUCTION

### DEAN'S WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Health Professions! We are pleased you chose to join one of our many excellent programs, which in combination have established us as a national leader in health professions education.

We are home to one of the largest health professions schools in the nation with more than 30 programs at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels, with more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled.

Moving into a post-COVID environment is a new start for everyone in health care, and you are in the best place to begin your personal journey toward joining this dynamic field. We are all committed to providing you a world-class education, and to support your pursuit of knowledge and your strong desire to serve others as a healthcare professional.

The pandemic has challenged all of us in many ways, and your entry into one of our professional programs demonstrates one of the most precious personal qualities one can have: resilience. That resilience has brought you here today and will continue to serve you well during your journey at UAB.

We recognize that healthcare needs - even outside of a pandemic - are constantly changing. That is why we continue to add innovative programs to our academic portfolio, and to enhance and revitalize ongoing programs. We also offer graduate programs you will only find in Alabama at UAB, such as Genetic Counseling, Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, Low Vision Rehabilitation, Health Physics, Healthcare Quality and Safety, doctoral-level Rehabilitation Science, and Biomedical and Health Sciences.

Our degrees and programs are fully accredited by their respective professional organizations. This means you will be eligible for licensure, national certification or registrations and enjoy being in high demand within the job market. Our first-time student exam pass rate on many credentialing exams is an astounding 98 percent or higher.

Graduating from the School of Health Professions means you will acquire an esteemed degree, have a host of job opportunities in healthcare – an industry that continues to grow rapidly – and be well prepared to make a difference in your community. We look forward to maintaining our relationship with you when you join our alumni community.

Our alumni give advice to current students that is worth repeating: “learn your craft, be a better professional for your patients, be open minded to future possibilities, and remember to have a healthy work/ life balance”.

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



Andrew J. Butler, PhD, FAPTA

## OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

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

The SHP initially took shape in 1969 as UAB gained autonomy within the University of Alabama System. Originally christened the School of Community and Allied Health Resources (SCAHR), the school incorporated the School of Health Services Administration and the Division of Allied Health Sciences from the College of General Studies with parts of the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology from the medical school. An innovative facility designed to meet the growing needs of the health care industry, the SCAHR was divided into four academic divisions that functioned like regular academic departments: Health Services Administration, Public Health and Environment, Allied Health Sciences, and the Regional Technical Institute for Health Occupations.

Throughout the 1970's and 80's the school's offerings were amended to reflect the changing health care industry. As a result of the changes, SCAHR became the School of Public and Allied Health (SPAH). Next it became the School of Community and Allied Health (SCAH) and later the School of Health Related Professions (SHRP). During this time, the school added several new areas of study including a nationally ranked program in Nutrition Sciences. Through the leadership and guidance of early visionaries, the school experienced unparalleled success, which continues to date.

Today, the School of Health Professions is comprised of more than 30 programs – at the certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels – across five academic departments: Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, Health Services Administration, Nutrition Sciences, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. The school is housed in three buildings, the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building, the Learning Resource Center Building, and the School of Health Professions Building (SHPB).

With more than 2,200 faculty, staff, and students, SHP is one of six schools comprising the world-renowned UAB Academic Health Center. Students have access to vast academic resources, state-of-the-art facilities, and progressive research.

SHP is proud of many accomplishments including:

- U.S. News & World Report ranks SHP programs in the nation's top 25
- Research funding is over \$14 million and growing
- The school is at the top of the list in research funding from the National Institutes of Health for schools of its type and has been either first or second in funding received since 1969

Under the current leadership of Dean Andrew Butler, the school has never been stronger or better positioned as a national leader in health professions education.

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS CONTACT INFORMATION

In addition to your program director and program faculty, the following individuals may be able to provide assistance with questions and issues related to your school and program activities.

**Kristin Chapleau, Director of Student Services and Advising**

205-996-4721; [kjohnsto@uab.edu](mailto:kjohnsto@uab.edu)

**Jennifer Christy, Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs**

205-934-5903; [jbraswel@uab.edu](mailto:jbraswel@uab.edu)

**Mary Foster, Dean's Executive Assistant**

205-934-5149; [fostermg@uab.edu](mailto:fostermg@uab.edu)

**Samantha Giordano-Mooga, PhD, Director of Undergraduate Honors Program**

205-996-1399; [sgiordan@uab.edu](mailto:sgiordan@uab.edu)

**Melanie Hart, PhD, Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs**

205-934-7528; [mhart2@uab.edu](mailto:mhart2@uab.edu)

**Kevin Storr, Director of Communications**

205-934-4159; [storr@uab.edu](mailto:storr@uab.edu)

**Lee Test, Director of Academic and Faculty Operations**

205-975-8034; [ltest@uab.edu](mailto:ltest@uab.edu)

**Marci Willis, Director, Learning Resource Center**

205-934-9472; [mbattles@uab.edu](mailto:mbattles@uab.edu)

## SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR

All dates related to registration, payments of tuition and fees, drop/add dates, other administrative requirements, and official school holidays are recorded on the UAB Academic Calendar available at [www.uab.edu/academiccalendar](http://www.uab.edu/academiccalendar).

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

The University established a new Academic Integrity Code effective August 23, 2021. This Code, which applies to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students as well as all academic activities, defines academic misconduct and outlines procedures for breaches of the code. Policies are established for resolution of charges of academic misconduct, and these processes are managed by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC). In the School of Health Profession, the AIC is the Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, the office is located in SHPB 660. The full text of the Academic Integrity Code is available at: <https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/policies/academic-integrity-code>.

### ADVISING

Undergraduate student advising is provided through the Student Services and Advising unit, which is housed in the SHPB 230 suite of offices, near the elevators on the 2nd floor. Walk-ins are accepted, but appointments are preferred. Contact information for individual advisors is listed below.

Anrika Steen, Academic Advisor III, SHPB 424E – 996-1689; [anrikam@uab.edu](mailto:anrikam@uab.edu)

Eileen Hatfield, Academic Advisor II, SHPB 230 – 205-934-4185; [mehatfie@uab.edu](mailto:mehatfie@uab.edu)

Chris Smith, Academic Advisor III, SHPB 230 – 205-934-5974; [cjsmith1@uab.edu](mailto:cjsmith1@uab.edu)

Adam Pinson, Academic Advisor III, SHPB 424A – 205-996-6789; [apinson@uab.edu](mailto:apinson@uab.edu)

Graduate student advising is provided through the SHP graduate programs.

### AMBASSADORS

Ambassadors help to spread awareness of the School of Health Professions and its multifaceted undergraduate and graduate programs, serving as liaisons between the department and university-wide student organizations, serve as a student voice in school and university committees, and with the timely goal of creating a sense of community for all SHP students. The SHP Ambassadors help to support the programs within the school that will impact recruitment and retention initiatives.

## ASKIT

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

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

## ATTENDANCE

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

The University of Alabama at Birmingham recognizes that the academic success of individual students is related to their class attendance and participation. Each course instructor is responsible for establishing policies concerning class attendance and make-up opportunities. Any such policies, including points for attendance and/or participation, penalties for absences, limits on excused absences, total allowable absences, etc., must be specified in the course syllabus provided to students at the beginning of the course term. Such policies are subject to departmental oversight and may not, by their specific prescriptions, negate or circumvent the accommodations provided below for excused absences.

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

Absences due to jury or military duty provided that official documentation have been provided to the instructor in a timely manner in advance.

Absences of students registered with Disabilities Services for disabilities eligible for "a reasonable number of disability-related absences" provided students give their instructors notice of a disability-related absence in advance or as soon as possible.

Absences due to participation in university-sponsored activities when the student is representing the university in an official capacity and as a critical participant, provided that the procedures below have been followed:

Before the end of the add/drop period, students must provide their instructor a schedule of anticipated excused absences in or with a letter explaining the nature of the expected absences from the director of the unit or department sponsoring the activity.

If a change in the schedule occurs, students are responsible for providing their instructors with advance written notification from the sponsoring unit or department.

Absences due to other extenuating circumstances that instructors deem excused. Such classification is at the discretion of the instructor and is predicated upon consistent treatment of all students. In these instances, instructors must devise a system for reasonable accommodation including, for example,

policies allowing for dropped exams/quizzes, make-up exams, rescheduling of student classroom presentations or early or later submission of written assignments.

## AWARDS AND HONOR SOCIETIES

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

- Alfred W. Sangster Award for Outstanding International Student – This award is presented annually to an international student in recognition of his or her academic and non-academic achievements.
- Alpha Eta Society – The UAB Chapter of this Society recognizes students registered in the final term of a baccalaureate or graduate health professions program. Inductees must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) and be in the upper 10% of their program. Nominations are made by program directors in spring and summer terms.
- Cecile Clardy Satterfield Award for Humanism in Health Care – This award is made annually to recognize one outstanding student for humanitarianism, professionalism, and commitment to health care. Nominations are coordinated by program directors, but may also be made by faculty, students, patients, or preceptors.
- Charles Brooks Award for Creativity – This award is made annually in recognition of creative accomplishments such as written publications or artistic contributions which complemented the student's academic activities. Nominations are made by program directors.
- Dean's Leadership and Service Award – Presented to a maximum of three outstanding SHP students annually, this award recognizes leadership to the School, UAB, and the community. Nominations are made by program directors or faculty.
- Phi Kappa Phi – This is the oldest, and most selective, all-discipline honor society in the nation. Membership is by invitation to the top 7.5% of junior students and the top 10% of seniors and graduate students. Nominations are made by program directors.

Please refer to the program section of this handbook for awards and honors available to students in individual programs.

## BACKGROUND CHECK

Students in SHP programs are required by policy to undergo a background check using the school's approved vendor, CastleBranch <https://discover.castlebranch.com/>, at the time of program admission, and again, prior to placement in a fieldwork I rotation. In addition, some sites are requiring the social media background check. This package code is different than the initial package code given. Instructions for requesting the background check and appropriate consent forms are provided to students by their programs. Please refer to the policy section of this handbook for the policy statement.

## **BLAZERID / BLAZERNET / EMAIL**

**BlazerID:** All students receive a unique identifier, the BlazerID, established at: [www.uab.edu/blazerid](http://www.uab.edu/blazerid). Your BlazerID is required for accessing BlazerNET and other campus resources. To activate one's BlazerID, select "Activate Accounts."

**BlazerNET** is the official portal of the UAB information network and is accessible from any Internet-accessible computer, on- or off-campus. Access BlazerNET from UAB home page [www.uab.edu](http://www.uab.edu) then choose UAB Quicklinks.

**Email: uab.edu** Monitor your email regularly. Your UAB email is the official communication medium for courses, news, information, and announcements. UAB student email is provided through Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based system. Students have 50 GB of email space and 25 GB of free file 1 TB storage.

## **BLAZER EXPRESS**

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

## **BOOKSTORE**

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

### **UAB Barnes and Noble Bookstore**

Location: 1400 University Blvd, Hill Student Center, 35233

Hours: M – F 8:00am – 6:00pm | Sat 10:00am – 2:00pm | Sun Closed

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

## **CAMPUS ONECARD**

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

## **CAMPUS MAP**

UAB's campus map can be found at the following: [www.uab.edu/map/](http://www.uab.edu/map/)

## CAMPUS SAFETY

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

## CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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

## CATALOG

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

## COUNSELING SERVICES

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

## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated many changes in our academic and administrative operating practices. The University continues to consult experts in the field to assess the pandemic and make data-driven decisions to safely pursue our vital mission. Students can view current COVID information and official policies at [www.uab.edu/uabunited](http://www.uab.edu/uabunited).

- Masking – Masks are not required in university meetings, events, classrooms or laboratories unless there is a non-COVID environmental health and safety policy or guideline that otherwise requires a mask for the setting or activity performed. Many individuals in our campus community may choose to wear a well-fitting mask. Members of the campus community are encouraged to respect the decisions others make in keeping with UAB's Shared Values.
- If you are not vaccinated, we highly encourage you to obtain the COVID vaccine – students may receive the vaccine at no cost through Student Health Services, at walk-up clinics, or through UAB Medicine. Scheduling information is available at <https://www.uab.edu/uabunited/covid-19-vaccine>
- If you are vaccinated, please upload an image of your vaccination card through the Student Health Patient Portal at [https://studentwellness.uab.edu/login\\_directory.aspx](https://studentwellness.uab.edu/login_directory.aspx).
- Students who experience COVID symptoms should not come on campus or clinical sites and should contact Student Health immediately for further instruction.
- Maintain hand hygiene with frequent handwashing and disinfectant solutions.

- Clean your work areas with disinfectant solution regularly.
- Eat only in designated spaces. Student may consume water in classrooms but should comply with any restrictions on food and other beverages that may be in place.

Students should refer to their course syllabus for additional requirements and guidelines.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

Collaboration, integrity, respect and excellence are shared values of our institution and are the core of what it means to be a UAB community member. And a key foundation at UAB is diversity, equity, and inclusion. At UAB, everybody counts every day. UAB is committed to fostering a diverse, respectful, and inclusive campus environment that values all community members regardless of background and embraces individual differences. UAB values and cultivates equity, diversity, and inclusion in our research, learning, clinical and work environments. Our students, faculty, and staff add diversity to our community through life experiences, perspectives and viewpoints that are enriching for the learning and work environment and are reflective of the students and communities we serve. Because UAB serves a diverse population, ODEI, along with our School of Health Professions initiatives, aims to create an inclusive environment for all UAB faculty, staff, students, and patients through education, training, and awareness programs.

[UAB Office of the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[SHP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Site](#)

## DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

“DSS provides an accessible university experience through collaboration with UAB partners. These partnerships create a campus where individuals with disabilities have equal access to programs, activities, and opportunities by identifying and removing barriers, providing individualized services, and facilitating accommodations.”

“DSS serves as the university-appointed office charged with providing institution-wide advisement, consultation, and training on disability-related topics which include legal and regulatory compliance, universal design, and disability scholarship.”

To apply for accommodations, contact DSS. **Note:** *You must have your Blazer ID and password.*

Telephone: (205) 934-4205 | (205) 934-4248 (TDD) Fax: (205) 934-8170

Email: [dss@uab.edu](mailto:dss@uab.edu) Website: [www.uab.edu/students/disability/](http://www.uab.edu/students/disability/)

## DRUG SCREENING

By policy, SHP students in programs requiring fieldwork placement (clinical, internship, practicum) are required to undergo a routine drug screen using the school’s approved vendor, CastleBranch, [www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com), at the time of program admission and again prior to placement in a fieldwork placement. Instructions for requesting the drug screen and appropriate consent forms will be provided to students by their programs. Please refer to the policy section of this handbook for the school and university policy statements. If you have questions, please contact [shrp-shpasdnfacffrs@uab.edu](mailto:shrp-shpasdnfacffrs@uab.edu).

## EMERGENCIES

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

**UAB Police:** Dial 911 *from a campus phone*  
or call: 205-934-3535 | 205-934-HELP (4357) | 205-934-4434

Emergencies affecting campus are communicated via the following:

- Weather & Emergency Hotline: (205) 934-2165
- University home web page: [www.uab.edu](http://www.uab.edu)
- Webpage: [www.uab.edu/emergency](http://www.uab.edu/emergency)
- Announcements on BlazerNET
- Twitter@UABALERT: [www.twitter.com/uabalert](http://www.twitter.com/uabalert)
- [facebook.com/UABALERT](https://www.facebook.com/UABALERT)
- Cell phone messages and SMS text – register for B-ALERT notices via <https://idm.uab.edu/ens/b-alert>

## FERPA TRAINING

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 provides protection for all educational records related to students enrolled in an educational program. Information about your rights and protection of your records is available at the following sites:

<https://sa.uab.edu/enrollment/services/ferpa/>. If you have questions or concerns about FERPA issues, you may email [FERPA@uab.edu](mailto:FERPA@uab.edu). All SHP students are required to complete [FERPA Training](#).

## FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Counselors are available each day in the One Stop Student Services Office located in the Hill Student Center. Additional financial aid information is located at [www.uab.edu/financialaid](http://www.uab.edu/financialaid).

## FOOD SERVICES

Dining facilities available on campus closest to the SHP buildings include the Commons on the Green – located on the Campus Green, south of 9th Avenue and the Campus Recreation Center. Additional information about meal plans and campus dining facilities is available at [www.uab.edu/dining](http://www.uab.edu/dining).

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

The UAB Graduate School offers doctoral programs, post-master's specialist programs, and master's level programs. Graduate programs in SHP are coordinated through the Graduate School and students must adhere to the Graduate School policies and procedures. Graduate School information for current students is available at [www.uab.edu/graduate/](http://www.uab.edu/graduate/). Policies and Procedures for the Graduate School can be located in the Graduate School Catalog [2022-2023 Catalog of Graduate Programs < Catalog | The University of Alabama at Birmingham \(uab.edu\)](#).

## GRADUATION

All students must complete an application for degree six months prior to graduating and not later than the deadline in the academic calendar. <https://www.uab.edu/commencement/faqs>. The University holds commencement every semester. Check the commencement website for the most current information: <https://www.uab.edu/commencement/>.

## MEDICAL CLEARANCE

SHP students in programs that are on campus (not fully online), are required to receive medical clearance at the time of program admission. UAB Student Health Services utilizes a secure web-based process for the storage of required documents accessed through BlazerNET. More information is available at the Student Health Services website: [www.uab.edu/students/health/medical-clearance/immunizations](http://www.uab.edu/students/health/medical-clearance/immunizations).

## IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To provide a safe and healthy environment for all students, faculty and staff at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), first-time entering students, international students and scholars, and students in clinical & non-clinical programs, provide proof of immunization against certain diseases: <https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=322>

## INSURANCE WAIVERS

To ensure that all students have adequate health care coverage, including ongoing primary and specialty care, the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) requires all students to have major medical health insurance. Students can provide proof of their own private coverage or be enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan. The plan is a 1-year commercial policy provided by United HealthCare and is re-negotiated annually. This policy is a comprehensive health insurance policy at an affordable cost that is specifically designed to meet the needs of UAB Students. If you are required to have insurance but have sufficient coverage on another plan and wish to opt out of the Student Health Insurance Plan, you are required to submit a waiver to Student Health Services at the beginning of every semester. More information including submitting a waiver can be found at this website: <https://www.uab.edu/students/health/insurance-waivers/waivers>

## HIPAA TRAINING

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

## **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN USE (IRB)**

Student researchers must comply with all requirements for protection of human subjects. Detailed information is available on the IRB website [www.uab.edu/irb](http://www.uab.edu/irb).

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Intellectual property refers to an asset that originated conceptually, such as literary and artistic works, inventions, or other creative works. These assets should be protected and used only as the creator intends. Training materials defining inventor status, patent criteria, and other intellectual property issues is available at [www.uab.edu/research/administration/offices/OSP/Pages/Training.aspx](http://www.uab.edu/research/administration/offices/OSP/Pages/Training.aspx).

## **LACTATION CENTERS**

Through the work of the UAB Commission on the Status of Women, the University has provided several lactation centers for students, faculty, and staff across the campus. Locations of the centers are available at <https://www.uab.edu/titleix/pregnancy-parenting/campus-community-support/lactation-centers>. The School of Health Professions' lactation room is in the Susan Mott Webb Nutrition Sciences Building at 1675 University Boulevard, room 219A. Female students enrolled in the School of Health Professions have access to the room via their student ID/OneCard. If you cannot access the room, contact the building administrator, Julia Tolbert-Jackson at (205) 934-4133.

## **LIBRARIES AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER**

UAB's libraries house excellent collections of books, periodicals, microforms, and other media. Students have online remote access to catalogs and online collections. Computers are available for student use during regular hours of operation. <https://library.uab.edu/locations>

### **SHP Learning Resource Center (LRC)**

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

Location: 1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.

Phone: (205) 934-5146

Email: [shplrc@uab.edu](mailto:shplrc@uab.edu)

### **Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences**

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

Location: 1700 University Boulevard

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

Phone: (205) 975-4821

### **Mervyn H. Sterne Library**

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

Location: 913 13<sup>th</sup> Street South

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

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

## **NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

The Student Conduct Code promotes honesty, integrity, accountability, rights, and responsibilities expected of students consistent with the core missions of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. This Code describes the standards of behavior for all students, and it outlines students' rights, responsibilities, and the campus processes for adjudicating alleged violations. Behavior that violates UAB standards of conduct listed within the Student Conduct Code and elsewhere will be subject to disciplinary action through the appropriate conduct process. Whether it is determined that an individual or group is responsible for the violation(s), either by direct involvement or by condoning, encouraging, or covering up the violation, appropriate response will occur with respect to the individual(s) and/or group involved.

Undergraduate Non-Academic Policies:

<http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/aboutuab/nonacademicpolicies/>

Graduate Non-Academic Policies:

<http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/academicprogress/#academicethicsandmisconducttext>

## **ONE STOP STUDENT SERVICES**

If you have questions or need assistance with an academic or administrative process, the UAB One Stop is where to go! Advisors will help you solve your problem or do the legwork for you if another UAB resource is needed. One Stop is located in the Hill Student Center, 1400 University Blvd. You may contact the One Stop office by phone or email at (205) 934-4300; 855-UAB-1STP; (855) 822-1787; [onestop@uab.edu](mailto:onestop@uab.edu). Additional information is available at [www.uab.edu/onestop](http://www.uab.edu/onestop).

## **PARKING**

Student vehicles must be registered with UAB Parking and Transportation Services, located at 608 8<sup>th</sup> Street South. The office is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Parking is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking fees are established by location, payable by semester or year, and are billed to the student's account. Additional information is available at [www.uab.edu/parking](http://www.uab.edu/parking).

## PATIENT CARE PARTNERSHIP

Students in health professions programs learn general information about the health care industry as well as knowledge and skills specific to their chosen profession. The American Hospital Association (AHA) ([www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org)) is an excellent resource for industry information. One role fulfilled by the AHA is that of patient advocate. The Patient Care Partnership brochure (link below) outlines rights and responsibilities of patients during hospital stays.

[www.aha.org/aha/issues/Communicating-With-Patients/pt-care-partnership.html](http://www.aha.org/aha/issues/Communicating-With-Patients/pt-care-partnership.html).

## PLAGIARISM AND TURNITIN

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

## RECREATION CENTER

The Campus Recreation Center, located at 1501 University Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35294, is open to faculty, staff, students, and their families. A valid student identification card or membership card is required for access. Facilities include basketball courts, racquetball courts, weight rooms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, and indoor track. Check the website for information about hours and services at [www.uab.edu/campusrecreation](http://www.uab.edu/campusrecreation).

## SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

The SHP has several scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in SHP programs. The Scholarship Committee, comprised of faculty and administrators, review and select awardees.

Scholarships available to students in any SHP program are the following:

*Carol E. Medders Endowed Scholarship* – Funding for students enrolled in a graduate program in the School of Health Professions. Awards are based on academic achievement and unmet financial need.

*Ethel M. and Jessie D. Smith Endowed Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship* – Funding for students enrolled in SHP programs with GPA 3.0 or above and unmet financial need. Student must be a resident of the state of Alabama at the time of enrollment.

*Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation Scholarship* – Funding for female students from selected states (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN) enrolled in SHP programs. Award amounts are variable and are based on unmet financial need.

*National Alumni Society Dean's Scholarship* – Funding from the UAB National Alumni Society for two scholarships per year, one to a graduate student and one to an undergraduate student.

*Sandra Dunning Huechtler Endowed Memorial Award* – Funding for students enrolled in SHP program with GPA 3.0 or above and unmet financial need.

*SHP Dean’s Scholarship* – Funding to recruit or retain outstanding students. Awards are based on academic achievement, and unmet financial need.

You may visit the UAB School of Health Professions Scholarship page to learn more <https://www.uab.edu/shp/home/about-us/shp-scholarships>. Application announcements are made by the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs. Many programs in SHP also have scholarships available to currently enrolled students in those programs. Please see the program section of this handbook for that information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can serve as useful communication tools. However, health professions students should use the forums judiciously. The school’s official sites are the following:

- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/UAB\\_SHP](https://twitter.com/UAB_SHP)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/UABSHP](http://www.facebook.com/UABSHP)
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/uabshp](http://www.youtube.com/uabshp)
- Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/uabshp>
- LinkedIn: [UAB SHP LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com/company/uabshp)
- Website: [www.uab.edu/shp](http://www.uab.edu/shp)

UAB Social Media Guidelines are outlined at <https://www.uab.edu/toolkit/social/guidelines>.

## STUDENT ADVOCACY, RIGHTS AND CONDUCT (SARC)

Student Advocacy, Rights and Conduct (SARC) is responsible for upholding the integrity and purpose of the university through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures to students’ behavior to ensure a community that respects the dignity and right of all persons to reach their highest potential. SARC delivers programs and services in order to promote student safety and success, the pursuit of knowledge, respect for self and others, global citizenship, personal accountability and integrity, and ethical development. More about SARC can be found here: [Student Advocacy, Rights & Conduct - Student Affairs - News | UAB](http://www.uab.edu/studentaffairs/news). The UAB student conduct code may be accessed online: [Student Conduct Code \(uab.edu\)](http://www.uab.edu/studentconduct).

## STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The University provides prevention, counseling, and treatment services to students through Student Health Services located at 1714 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The clinic is open from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday; 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Friday. Detailed information about services and operating practices is located on the SHS website at [www.uab.edu/studenthealth](http://www.uab.edu/studenthealth). Appointments may be scheduled by calling 205-934-3580.

## TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees for the University are published annually under the “Current Students” tab of the UAB website. They may be paid through BlazerNET. SHP programs have specific fees attached to programs,

courses, and/ or laboratories. See the school fees at <https://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/detailed-tuition-and-fees>.

Payment deadlines for each semester are published on the official academic calendar and on the UAB website at [www.uab.edu/whentopay/](http://www.uab.edu/whentopay/). Please note that failure to meet payment deadlines can result in being administratively withdrawn from courses.

## **WEATHER**

Severe weather situations that may affect the safety of students, faculty, and staff are communicated through the same channels as other emergencies. Severe weather precautions are published at [www.uab.edu/emergency/preparedness](http://www.uab.edu/emergency/preparedness). Other information sources include:

- Webpage: [www.uab.edu/emergency](http://www.uab.edu/emergency)
- B-ALERT System: [www.uab.edu/balert](http://www.uab.edu/balert)
- Hotline: (205) 934-2165
- WBHM Radio (90.3 FM)

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSE / PROGRAM**

Withdrawal from a course or from your program is an official process and should be discussed with your academic advisor and / or program director. Most programs in the School are full-time and the curricula specifically sequenced. Withdrawal from a course may risk your wait time to register for the class again. You might have to wait for a full year before resuming enrollment in the program. Withdrawals are made through the UAB registration system via the Student Resources tab in BlazerNET. Notice of program withdrawal should be given in writing to the program director. Please refer to the following link for additional information on withdrawal guidelines: <https://www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/classes/add-drop-and-withdrawal-policy>

## SECTION 2 – SHP AND UAB POLICIES

### SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES

#### BACKGROUND CHECK AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

With the exceptions noted below, students admitted to clinical and non-clinical programs in the School of Health Professions (SHP) will complete a routine drug screening and criminal background check using the approved vendor ([CastleBranch](#)). These screenings should be completed prior to the end of the first term of enrollment. A second routine drug screening and criminal background check using the approved school vendor, or a vendor required by the assigned clinical facility, will be completed prior to placement in assigned fieldwork. Any required additional screenings, and/or those specified by waived programs, will be at the discretion of the program.

Students enrolled in SHP undergraduate programs requiring an internship or other site placement as a component of degree requirements will complete a learning module in the campus learning management system by the end of the first semester of enrollment. They will submit the results of a drug screening and criminal background check from an approved vendor, prior to the end of the semester, immediately preceding the semester for which the internship or site placement occurs.

- School-negotiated fees for these screenings will be the responsibility of the student.
- Students who have completed the screenings as a condition of enrollment in a previous SHP program are waived from the requisite unless the current program of enrollment also includes an internship or fieldwork placement component for degree completion.
- Drug screening and background check results performed by an approved vendor, within the most recent twelve months, may fulfill the SHP requirement
- The rules and regulations governing individual fieldwork placement sites may include additional provisions and/or more stringent guidelines which supersede this policy. Fees for these screenings are the responsibility of the student.
- Should you fail the drug screening, or your background check contains issues that may prevent you from receiving or sitting for licensure, a representative from the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs will contact you. Depending upon the outcome, you may be dismissed from the program. See your program's guidelines regarding specific consequences.

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

Administration Health Services, PhD  
Biomedical Sciences to Biotechnology Fast Track  
Biomedical Sciences to Clinical Laboratory Science Fast Track  
Biomedical Sciences to Health Physics Fast Track  
Biomedical and Health Sciences, MS

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

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

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

Programs requiring the background check and drug screening learning module during the first semester of enrollment, a criminal background check and drug screening by the end of the semester immediately preceding fieldwork placement or internship (if applicable) are the following:

Health Care Management, BS  
 Biomedical Sciences, BS  
 Biobehavioral Nutrition and Wellness, BS

Programs waived from the Background Check and Drug Screening requirement are the following: \*

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

- Clinical Track-Prior Learning
- Lifestyle Management and Disease Prevention Track

Low Vision Rehabilitation, Graduate Certificate  
Occupational Therapy Doctorate (Post Professional)  
Physical Therapy Residencies (Neurologic, Orthopedic)

**Attachments:**

- Procedure for Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening
- Student Instructions
- Consent to Drug Testing and Release of Drug Test Results
- Consent to Criminal Background Check and Release of Results

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

## **Attachment 1:**

### **Procedure for Criminal Background Check and Drug Screening**

1. Program directors (or designees) provide all accepted students with instructions for completing a background check and drug screening.
2. Students request the specified package on the approved SHP vendor website and pay the required fees.
3. Assigned designee(s) in the SHP Office for Academic and Faculty Affairs review and provide compliance reports for programs.
4. In the event a report reveals information which may prevent a student from being placed in a fieldwork rotation or potentially makes them ineligible for professional certification or licensure, the SHP Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs works in conjunction with the program director to notify the student. If such information exists, the student must acknowledge in writing their decision to continue in the program's didactic phase with the understanding that a degree cannot be awarded without completion of required fieldwork placement.
5. Prior to fieldwork placement, program directors (or designees) will provide students with instructions to complete a repeat background check and drug screening. In addition, some sites require a social media background check. The package code for this is different than the initial drug screen and background package code. If a vendor is specified by the placement site or preceptor, the preceptor (or designee) will provide students with instructions.
6. Students are responsible for all additional fieldwork placement requirements.
7. The program director discusses with individual student's implications for information which may inhibit an assigned fieldwork placement.
8. Students provide preceptors or internship supervisors with the required information from the results of their background check and drug screening reports if required.

## Attachment 2:



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

#### About CastleBranch.com

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

#### Order Summary

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##### Required Personal Information

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

##### Drug Test (LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics)

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

##### Payment Information

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

#### Place Your Order

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Go to: [www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com) and enter package code:

AH01 - Background Check and Drug Test

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

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

#### View Your Results

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

**Attachment 3:**

**UAB School of Health Professions**

**Consent to Drug Testing and Release of Drug Test Results**

For and in consideration of my participation in clinical education experiences, I understand that I will be required to submit to drug testing as a prerequisite to my assignment to a clinical site. I hereby consent to be tested for drugs and consent to the release of any such drug test results to the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs, my Program Director, and the subsequent release of such drug test results to the clinical site to which I am assigned.

I understand that any clinical site to which I am assigned has the right to require additional drug testing as a condition of my placement. I hereby consent to any facility-required drug testing and consent to the release of such drug test results to my Program Director.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian  
(required only if student is under 19)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Attachment 4:**

**UAB School of Health Professions**

**Consent to Criminal Background Check and Release of Results**

For and in consideration of my participation in clinical education experiences, I understand that I will be required to submit to a criminal background check as a prerequisite to my assignment to a clinical site. I hereby consent to have a criminal background check and consent to the release the results to the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs, my Program Director, and the subsequent release of the results to the clinical site to which I am assigned.

I understand that any clinical site to which I am assigned has the right to require additional background check as a condition of my placement. I hereby consent to any facility-required background check and consent to the release of the results of the check to my Program Director.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian  
(required only if student is under 19)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **EMERGENCY PLAN - SHPB**

The current SHPB Emergency Plan can be accessed at <https://www.uab.edu/shp/home/emergency-plan>.

## **FINAL COURSE GRADE APPEAL PROCESS**

[www.uab.edu/shp/home/images/PDF/grievance\\_procedures.pdf](http://www.uab.edu/shp/home/images/PDF/grievance_procedures.pdf)

## **PLAGIARISM**

[www.uab.edu/shp/home/images/PDF/Plagiarism\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.uab.edu/shp/home/images/PDF/Plagiarism_Policy.pdf)

*Please note that all papers submitted for grading in any SHP program may be reviewed using the online plagiarism monitoring software, [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com). All documents submitted to [Turnitin.com](http://Turnitin.com) are added to their database of papers used to screen future assignments for plagiarism.*

# **UAB POLICIES**

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS**

### **ATTENDANCE / ABSENCE (UNDERGRADUATE)**

<http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/progresstowardadegree/#enrollmenttext>

## **HEALTH**

### **BLOOD AND BODY FLUID EXPOSURE**

<https://www.uab.edu/employee-health/employees/needle-sticks-exposures>

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=322>

## **SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE**

### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, USE AND CONSUMPTION**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=373>

### **DRUG FREE CAMPUS (GENERAL POLICY)**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=416>

### **NON-SMOKING**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=392>

## **TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES**

### **COMPUTER AND NETWORK RESOURCES (ACCEPTABLE USE)**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=300>

### **COMPUTER SOFTWARE COPYING AND USE**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=153>

## **INCLUSIVENESS**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=98>

## **RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE**

<https://www.uab.edu/one-stop/policies/academic-integrity-code>

### **ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RESEARCH AND OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=398>

### **PATENT (INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY)**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=397>

## **CAMPUS SAFETY**

### **FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, AND OTHER DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

<https://secure2.compliancebridge.com/uab/portal/getdoc.php?file=330>

*Note: Additional university policies may be located by searching the UAB Policies and Procedures Library available online at [www.uab.edu/policies/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.uab.edu/policies/Pages/default.aspx).*

## SECTION 3 – PROGRAM INFORMATION

### WELCOME

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

### MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

**UAB Vision:** One university inspiring and empowering the creation of knowledge that changes the world.

**UAB Mission:** UAB serves students, patients, the community and the global need for discovery, knowledge dissemination, education, creativity, and the application of groundbreaking solutions. We are a leader among comprehensive public urban research universities with academic medical centers.

**UAB Shared Values:**

- **Integrity** – We act ethically and do what is right.
- **Respect** – We treat others with courtesy and civility.
- **Diversity and inclusiveness** – Everybody counts every day. We actively seek varied perspectives in our decision-making.
- **Collaboration** – We trust each other and work cooperatively across disciplinary boundaries in the spirit of shared governance.
- **Excellence and achievement** – We constantly innovate, solve problems and improve ourselves and others through learning.
- **Stewardship** – Fiscal and environmental sustainability guide our decisions.
- **Accountability** – We are answerable to each other and act with the best interests of the university in mind.

UAB’s vision, mission and values provide a framework and common language for collaboration and strategic goals that will build on our strong foundation. UAB serves students and patients while recognizing that we are also embedded in a vibrant community.

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

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

**SHP Values:** Collaboration | Compassion & Caring | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Excellence & Achievement | Integrity | Respect | Service | Social Responsibility | Stewardship

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

**Department of Genetics Mission:** The Department of Genetics is dedicated to the generation of new knowledge about genetics and genomics, translation of that knowledge to clinical practice, and integration of genetics into all aspects of medical care.

All four entities have common core missions to provide quality education, research, teaching, health care, and community service. These values will serve to support the program and its students and faculty in the development and implementation of a well-rounded program.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham is a joint effort between the Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (CDS) in the School of Health Professions (SHP) and the Department of Genetics (DOG) in the School of Medicine. A partnership has been established to meet the administrative and curriculum needs of the program to provide students with a quality education in genetic counseling.

The Genetic Counseling Program leadership team consists of a program director, the director of industry and genomic curriculum, and a medical director. The program director is the designated facilitator of all aspects of the genetic counseling program. The director of industry and genomic curriculum guides the curricular components related to genomics and industry related knowledge and skills. The medical director provides clinical and genetic expertise to guide the development of the program as the field of genetics and genetic counseling continue to evolve. The program leadership team meets annually with the program advisory board to review the program outcomes and discuss program changes and developments. The role of the advisory board is to guide the academic, clinical, and research directions of the program.

The program's curriculum utilizes numerous resources for genetics education on the UAB campus. The core components of the program include didactic education, clinical experiences, and a Plan II graduate

level project. Students will complete 57 credit hours to obtain the degree. The coursework is presented in a variety of in person and online formats. Coursework includes topic-based lectures, problem-based learning, case studies, group discussion, student presentations, role-playing activities, and medical simulations. Online course work is available to students during their offsite rotation experiences and is taught in a synchronous format with students on campus. Genetic counseling topics will be infused into all major coursework to make each course directly applicable to preparation for professional practice. All coursework will be supported by online resources (Canvas Learning Management System).

Student clinical experiences will be on the UAB medical campus, at the UAB-affiliated Children's Hospital of Alabama, and with the program's clinical training partner institutions. The program's current clinical partners are, the Geisinger Health System in Danville, PA (retired 2024), Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, MO, Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon, Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Kentucky, and multiple sites in Memphis, Tennessee including Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Baptist Memorial Hospital and the West Cancer Clinic. Sites of clinical training are established at enrollment during the genetic counseling match process and will be honored for the duration of training whenever possible. In rare cases, adjustment of clinical tracks during the course of student training may be necessary. UAB also has affiliation agreements with several additional institutions and is able to establish new affiliation agreements as needed. Students are encouraged to go off campus for their summer rotation, which is not part of the match. Students will have exposure to clinical care during their first year as part of their coursework. The first full rotation will be in the summer after the first year, and rotations will continue through both semesters of the second year. The program has established internal standards for specific case types and roles that each student will meet. These standards will include the minimum 50 participatory cases required by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), as well as other clinical experiences that will prepare students for clinical practice and board certification through acquiring the ACGC Practice Based Competencies (PBCs).

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

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

1. Students will comply with the requirements of the UAB Graduate School (students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.00).

2. Students will comply with the requirements of the program. Students must receive a grade of B or higher in all GC core classes (noted with a GC prefix), including clinical rotations.
3. Students must satisfactorily complete all of the program's courses.
4. Students must satisfactorily complete the clinical portion of the curriculum.
5. Students must satisfactorily complete a Plan II graduate project.
6. Students must attend all mandatory supplemental activities as required by the program faculty.
7. Students are expected to behave in a professional and ethical manner that the program faculty consider necessary to function as competent and responsible genetic counselors. The [National Society of Genetic Counselors \(NSGC\) Code of Ethics](#) is one document that describes the professional attributes that form the core of the goals and values of our profession.
8. Students are expected to treat individuals with respect and equity regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical or cognitive abilities.
9. Students are expected to be responsive to feedback from program faculty and clinical supervisors.
10. Students are expected to have regular contact with the program faculty monitoring their academic activities and performance and discuss any difficulties that may interfere with their optimal performance or be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.
11. Students will meet individually on a regular basis with the program director and/or program leadership for advising to discuss current progress in their coursework, clinical rotations, graduate project, and professional goals.
12. During each of the clinical rotations, the student's progress and performance will be monitored and evaluated by the clinical supervisor. A student evaluation form will be completed at the end of the rotation. The student will also complete an evaluation of the rotation and their supervisor. The clinical supervisor will discuss the evaluation with the student. Both must be turned in before the student receives a grade for the rotation.

## ACCREDITATION

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

### ACGC

PO Box 15632

Lenexa, KS 66285

(913) 895-4629

<http://www.gceducation.org>

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

## ACGC PRACTICE BASED COMPETENCIES

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

- (I) Genetics Expertise and Analysis
- (II) Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills
- (III) Education
- (IV) Professional Development & Practice.

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

## **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.**

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of principles of human, medical, and public health genetics and genomics and their related sciences. These include:
  - Mendelian and non-Mendelian inheritance
  - Population and quantitative genetics
  - Human variation and disease susceptibility
  - Family history and pedigree analysis
  - Normal/abnormal physical & psychological development
  - Human reproduction
  - Prenatal genetics
  - Pediatric genetics
  - Adult genetics
  - Personalized genomic medicine
  - Cytogenetics
  - Biochemical genetics
  - Molecular genetics
  - Embryology/Teratology/Developmental genetics
  - Cancer genetics
  - Cardiovascular genetics
  - Neurogenetics
  - Pharmacogenetics
  - Psychiatric genetics
- b. Apply knowledge of genetic principles and understand how they contribute to etiology, clinical features and disease expression, natural history, differential diagnoses, genetic testing and test report interpretation, pathophysiology, recurrence risk, management and prevention, and *population screening*.

### **2. Integrate knowledge of psychosocial aspects of conditions with a genetic component to promote client well-being.**

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of psychosocial, ethical, and legal issues related to genetic counseling encounters.
- b. Describe common emotional and/or behavioral responses that may commonly occur in the genetic counseling context.

- c. Recognize the importance of understanding the lived experiences of people with various genetic/ genomic conditions.
- d. Evaluate the potential impact of psychosocial issues on client decision-making and adherence to medical management.

### **3. Construct relevant, targeted and comprehensive personal and family histories and pedigrees.**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of pedigree symbols, standard notation, and nomenclature.
- b. Utilize interviewing skills to elicit a family history and pursue a relevant path of inquiry.
- c. Use active listening skills to formulate structured questions for the individual case depending on the reason for taking the family history and/or potential diagnoses.
- d. Elicit and assess pertinent information relating to medical, developmental, pregnancy and psychosocial histories.
- e. Extract pertinent information from available medical records.

### **4. Identify, assess, facilitate, and integrate genetic testing options in genetic counseling practice.**

- a. Investigate the availability, analytic validity, clinical validity, and clinical utility of screening, diagnostic and predictive genetic/genomic tests.
- b. Evaluate and assess laboratories and select the most appropriate laboratory and test based on the clinical situation.
- c. Identify and discuss the potential benefits, risks, limitations and costs of genetic testing.
- d. Coordinate and facilitate the ordering of appropriate genetic testing for the client.
- e. Interpret the clinical implications of genetic test reports.
- f. Recognize and differentiate specific considerations relevant to genetic versus genomic and clinical versus research testing in terms of the informed consent process, results disclosure, institutional review board (IRB) guidelines, and clinical decision-making.

### **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.**

- a. Assess probability of conditions with a genetic component or carrier status using relevant knowledge and data based on pedigree analysis, inheritance patterns, genetic epidemiology, quantitative genetics principles, and mathematical calculations.
- b. Incorporate the results of screening, diagnostic and predictive genetic/genomic tests to provide accurate risk assessment for clients.
- c. Evaluate familial implications of genetic/genomic test results.
- d. Identify and integrate relevant information about environmental and lifestyle factors into the risk assessment.

**6. Demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully manage a genetic counseling case.**

- a. Develop and execute a case management plan that includes case preparation and follow-up.
- b. Assess and modify the case management plan as needed to incorporate changes in management and surveillance recommendations.
- c. Document and present the genetic counseling encounter information clearly and concisely, orally and in writing, in a manner that is understandable to the audience and in accordance with professional and institutional guidelines and standards.
- d. Identify and introduce research options when indicated and requested in compliance with applicable privacy, human subjects, regional and institutional standards.
- e. Identify, access and present information to clients on local, regional, national and international resources, services and support.

**7. Critically assess genetic/genomic, medical and social science literature and information.**

- a. Plan and execute a thorough search and review of the literature.
- b. Evaluate and critique scientific papers and identify appropriate conclusions by applying knowledge of relevant research methodologies and statistical analyses.
- c. Synthesize information obtained from a literature review to utilize in genetic counseling encounters.

- d. Incorporate medical and scientific literature into evidenced-based practice recognizing that there are limitations and gaps in knowledge and data.

**Domain II: Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling**

**Skills**

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

- a. Describe the genetic counseling process to clients.
- b. Elicit client expectations, perceptions, knowledge, and concerns regarding the genetic counseling encounter and the reason for referral or contact.
- c. Apply client expectations, perceptions, knowledge and concerns towards the development of a mutually agreed upon agenda.
- d. Modify the genetic counseling agenda, as appropriate by continually *contracting* to address emerging concerns.

**9. Employ active listening and interviewing skills to identify, assess, and empathically respond to stated and emerging concerns.**

- a. Elicit and evaluate client emotions, individual and family experiences, beliefs, behaviors, values, coping mechanisms and adaptive capabilities.
- b. Engage in relationship-building with the client by establishing rapport, employing active listening skills and demonstrating empathy.
- c. Assess and respond to client emotional and behavioral cues, expressed both verbally and non-verbally, including emotions affecting understanding, retention, perception, and decision-making.

**10. Use a range of genetic counseling skills and models to facilitate informed decision-making and adaptation to genetic risks or conditions.**

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of psychological defenses, family dynamics, family systems theory, coping models, the grief process, and reactions to illness.
- b. Utilize a range of basic counseling skills, such as open-ended questions, reflection, and normalization.

- c. Employ a variety of advanced genetic counseling skills, such as anticipatory guidance and in-depth exploration of client responses to risks and options.
- d. Assess clients' psychosocial needs, and evaluate the need for intervention and referral.
- e. Apply evidence-based models to guide genetic counseling practice, such as short-term client-centered counseling, grief counseling and crisis counseling.
- f. Develop an appropriate follow-up plan to address psychosocial concerns that have emerged in the encounter, including referrals for psychological services when indicated.

**11. Promote *client-centered*, informed, non-coercive and value-based decision-making.**

- a. Recognize one's own values and biases as they relate to genetic counseling.
- b. Actively facilitate client decision-making that is consistent with the client's values.
- c. Recognize and respond to client-counselor relationship dynamics, such as transference and countertransference, which may affect the genetic counseling interaction.
- d. Describe the continuum of non-directiveness to directiveness, and effectively utilize an appropriate degree of guidance for specific genetic counseling encounters.
- e. Maintain professional boundaries by ensuring directive statements, self-disclosure, and self-involving responses are in the best interest of the client.

**12. Understand how to adapt genetic counseling skills for varied service delivery models.**

- a. Tailor communication to a range of service delivery models to meet the needs of various audiences.
- b. Compare strengths and limitations of different service delivery models given the genetic counseling indication.
- c. Describe the benefits and limitations of *distance encounters*.
- d. Tailor genetic counseling to a range of service delivery models using relevant verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.
- e. Recognize psychosocial concerns unique to distance genetic counseling encounters.

**13. Apply genetic counseling skills in a culturally responsive and respectful manner to all clients.**

- a. Describe how aspects of culture including language, ethnicity, life-style, socioeconomic status, disability, sexuality, age and gender affect the genetic counseling encounter.
- b. Assess and respond to client cultural beliefs relevant to the genetic counseling encounter.
- c. Utilize multicultural genetic counseling resources to plan and tailor genetic counseling agendas, and assess and counsel clients.
- d. Identify how the genetic counselor's personal cultural characteristics and biases may impact encounters and use this knowledge to maintain effective client-focused services.

**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.**

- a. Identify factors that affect the learning process such as intellectual ability, emotional state, socio-economic factors, physical abilities, religious and cultural beliefs, motivation, language and educational background.
- b. Recognize and apply risk communication principles and theory to maximize client understanding.
- c. Communicate relevant genetic and genomic information to help clients understand and adapt to conditions or the risk of conditions and to engage in informed decision-making.
- d. Utilize a range of tools to enhance the learning encounter such as handouts, visual aids, and other educational technologies.
- e. Communicate both orally and in writing using a style and method that is clear and unambiguous.
- f. Present balanced descriptions of lived experiences of people with various conditions.
- g. Explain and address client concerns regarding genetic privacy and related protections.
- h. Employ strategies for successful communication when working with interpreters.

**15. Write concise and understandable clinical and scientific information for audiences of varying educational backgrounds.**

- a. Develop written educational materials tailored to the intended audience.
- b. Recognize the professional and legal importance of medical documentation and confidentiality.
- c. Assess the challenges faced by clients with low literacy and modify the presentation of information to reduce the literacy burden.

**16. Effectively give a presentation on genetics, genomics and genetic counseling issues.**

- a. Assess and determine the educational goals and learning objectives based on the needs and characteristics of the audience.
- b. Develop an educational method or approach that best facilitates the educational goals of the presentation and considers the characteristics of the audience.
- c. Present using a delivery style that results in effective communication to the intended audience that is clear and unambiguous.
- d. Assess one's own teaching style and use feedback and other outcome data to refine future educational encounters.

**Domain IV: Professional Development and 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.**

- a. Follow the guidance of the National Society of Genetic Counselors Code of Ethics.
- b. Recognize and respond to ethical and moral dilemmas arising in genetic counseling practice and seek outside consultation when needed.
- c. Identify and utilize factors that promote client autonomy.
- d. Ascertain and comply with current professional credentialing requirements, at the institutional, state, regional and national level.
- e. Recognize and acknowledge situations that may result in a real or perceived conflict of interest.

**18. Demonstrate understanding of the research process.**

- a. Articulate the value of research to enhance the practice of genetic counseling.
- b. Demonstrate an ability to formulate a research question.
- c. Recognize the various roles a genetic counselor can play on a research team and identify opportunities to participate in and/or lead research studies.
- d. Identify available research-related resources.
- e. Apply knowledge of *research methodology* and *study design* to critically evaluate research outcomes.
- f. Apply knowledge of research methodology and study designs to educate clients about research studies relevant to them/their family.
- g. Describe the importance of human subjects' protection and the role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process.

**19. Advocate for individuals, families, communities and the genetic counseling profession.**

- a. Recognize the potential tension between the values of clients, families, communities and the genetic counseling profession.
- b. Support client and community interests in accessing, or declining, social and health services and clinical research.
- c. Identify genetic professional organizations and describe opportunities for participation and leadership.
- d. Employ strategies that to increase/promote access to genetic counseling services.

**20. Demonstrate a self-reflective, evidenced-based and current approach to genetic counseling practice.**

- a. Display initiative for lifelong learning.
- b. Recognize one's limitations and capabilities in the context of genetic counseling practice.
- c. Seek feedback and respond appropriately to performance critique.
- d. Demonstrate a scholarly approach to genetic counseling, including using available evidence-based principles in the preparation and execution of a genetic counseling encounter.
- e. Identify appropriate individual and/or group opportunities for ongoing personal supervision and mentorship.
- f. Accept responsible for one's physical and emotional health as it impacts on professional performance.

- g. Recognize and respect professional boundaries between clients, colleagues, and supervisors.

**21. Understand the methods, roles and responsibilities of the process of clinical supervision of trainees.**

- a. Engage in active reflection of one's own clinical supervision experiences.
- b. Identify resources to acquire skills to appropriately supervise trainees.
- c. Demonstrate understanding of the dynamics and responsibilities of the supervisor/supervisee relationship.

**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.**

- a. Distinguish the genetic counseling *scope of practice* in relation to the roles of other health professionals.

- b. Develop positive relationships with professionals across different disciplines.
- c. Demonstrate familiarity with the *health care system* as it relates to genetic counseling practice including relevant privacy regulations, referral and payment systems.
- d. Demonstrate effective interaction with other professionals within the healthcare infrastructure to promote appropriate and equitable delivery of genetic services.
- e. Assist non-genetic healthcare providers in utilizing genetic information to improve patient care in a cost-effective manner.
- f. Promote responsible use of genetic/genomic technologies and information to enhance the health of individuals, communities, and the public.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS

In order to successfully complete the degree requirements for the curriculum for the Master of Science (M.S.) in Genetic Counseling Program, students must complete the academic and clinical practice requirements of the program in preparation to practice as an entry-level genetic counselor(s). As defined by the program's accrediting body, the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, an entry-level genetic counselor may demonstrate mastery of a broad body of genetics knowledge and develop skills in the following domains: Genetic Expertise and Analysis; Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills; Education; and Professional Development and Practice. Graduate training is a rigorous and intense training process that places specific requirements and demands on enrolled students. The essential functions below extend beyond academic requirements for admission and are standards that all enrolled students must meet in order to successfully complete graduate training.

All genetic counseling students must meet the following requirements:

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

### Technical Standards:

The student must possess sufficient cognitive skills to:

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

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

- Demonstrate positive sufficient interpersonal skills including, but not limited to, cooperation, flexibility, tact, empathy, and confidence.
- Collaborate with classmates, clients and their family members and significant others, and additional members of office and medical team while on clinical rotations
- Function successfully in supervisory, and instructor-student relationships; change and adjust behavior and performance in the classroom or clinic on the basis of instructor feedback.
- Participate equitably in cooperative group learning activities; actively participate in class discussions and as a member of a team.
- Orally present information to groups of people with various educational backgrounds.
- Use language that is appropriate for the recipient. including with faculty, peers, clients, and other health professionals from different social and cultural backgrounds.
- Obtain information from clients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and other professionals.
- Utilize the computer for communication and class assignments.

The student must possess sufficient professional behavior to:

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

The student must possess sufficient physical and sensory skills to:

- Tolerate sitting up to 3 hours at a time, over an 8-10 hour period.
- Legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, and referrals, etc., in standard medical charts in clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
- Travel to various community and clinical rotation sites for experiential learning.

## FACULTY & STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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## ADVISORY BOARD

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

Name	Credentials	Affiliation	Expertise	Email
<b>Program Leadership</b>				
Jessica Denton	PhD, MS, CGC	UAB School of Health Professions	Program Director	jljohnso@uab.edu
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<b>Committee Members</b>				
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Emily Guilbert	MS, CGC	Legacy Health, Portland, Oregon	Young Alumni Representative	emilyguilbert93@gmail.com
Christina Hurst	MS, CGC	InformedDNA	Industry and Non-clinical Genetic Counseling	cbhurst@informeddna.com
Irene (Renie) Moss	MS	UAB Genetics	Consumer Representative, Parent/Spouse	imoss@uabmc.edu
Kathy Nugent	PhD	UAB Dept of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences	Department Chair	knugent@uab.edu

## ADVISING & MENTORING

The Program Director and program leadership are available to discuss the needs and concerns of GCTP students. Faculty and peer advising are available to all students in the GCP.

### FACULTY ADVISING

#### Description and Expectations

Students will meet with the program director and/or program leadership a minimum of one time per semester.

#### Objectives of advising:

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

#### Expectations of the Advisor:

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

#### Expectations of the student:

- To meet with your advisor on a regular basis
- To keep your advisor informed of your academic and clinical performance and any potential problems
- To talk to your advisor about any problems with clinical rotations, supervisors etc. (They may not be able to fix the problem, but they could address who you need to speak to etc.)
- To keep your advisor informed of your Plan II project
- Complete and review the “Professional Performance Evaluation” and goal setting worksheet for self-assessment as a part of semester advising

Students will also have additional faculty mentors as a part of their Plan II project committee and their clinical rotation supervisors. Meeting with your project and/or clinical supervisors should not substitute for communication with the director(s) of the program. If you have a problem with your supervisor or project committee member, please speak to the program director. Should any student have an issue regarding the program director and/or program leadership that they would like to discuss with a faculty member, they are encouraged to meet with the program's medical director or the Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences Chairperson.

#### **UAB GENETIC COUNSELING PROGRAM PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

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

### Professionalism Rubric

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

## **PEER MENTOR PROGRAM**

First year GCTP students will be matched by the program faculty with a second year peer advisor. The second year students provide peer insights into how to successfully traverse the challenges that face the new students in a genetic counseling program. This mentorship program is designed to be an informal, student driven experience to help students adjust to life as a graduate student, discuss common 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.

## **ALUMNI MENTOR PROGRAM**

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

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Fall Semester Year 1**

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

### **Spring Semester Year 1**

- ANSC 656 Human Embryology (2)
- GC 504 Prenatal Genetics, Embryology, and Teratology (3)
- GC 506 Theory and Practice of Genetic Counseling (3)
- GC 505 Principles of Cancer and Adult Genetics and Counseling (3)

GC 560 Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)

ECG 638 Counseling Skills and Techniques (3)

**Summer Semester**

GC 650 Clinical Laboratory Rotation (2)

GC 651 Clinical Rotation I (4)

GC 698 Non-thesis Research (1)

**Fall Semester Year 2**

GC 560 Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)

GC 600 Advanced Clinical Skills in Genetic Counseling (2)

GC 652 Clinical Rotation II (2)

GC 653 Clinical Rotation III (2)

GC 698 Non-thesis Research ( )

**Spring Semester Year 2**

GC 602 Advanced Topics in Genetic Counseling (2)

GC 654 Clinical Rotation IV (2)

GC 655 Clinical Rotation V (2)

GC 560 Genetic Counseling Journal Club (1)

GC 698 Non-thesis Research (2)

CDS 605 Survival Spanish for Health Professionals (1)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Department of Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences (CDS) Courses**

#### **CDS 505 Professional Skills (1 hour) Fall Year 1**

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

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

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

#### **CDS 605 Survival Spanish for Health Care Professionals (1 hour) Spring Year 2**

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

### **School of Education Coursework**

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

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

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

Practicum introducing the counseling process.

### **School of Medicine Courses**

#### **ANSC 656 Human Embryology (2 hours) Spring Year 1**

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

### **Genetic Counseling (GC) Courses**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advanced genetic counseling skills as preparation to enter clinical settings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Graduate level research project under the supervision of clinical faculty.

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

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

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

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

**Rotation Coursework**

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

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

**GC 651 Clinical Rotation I (4 hours) Summer**

Initial clinical rotation for students to establish basic skill set in genetic counseling applications. Students will interact with an array of genetic specialists in a clinical setting. Supervised and direct

patient contact in prenatal, pediatric, adult, cancer and specialty clinics will allow students to acquire cases for ABGC certification.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **COURSE FORMAT**

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

## **VIRTUAL CLASS ATTENDANCE**

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

All students joining class via Zoom will comply with all course, department, and university policies. Students are required to enable their microphone and webcam to fully participate in class. Students are required to join from a private, secure location with minimal distractions (no pets or other individuals,

including children, should be in the room with the student during class). Students should not join class via Zoom while driving or from a public space (restaurant, coffee shop, hotel lobby, etc.).

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

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

Absences during clinical rotations are strongly discouraged, whether excused or unexcused. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments or other activities during days they do not have clinic in order to not disrupt the clinical rotation schedule, which is made to accommodate multiple learners beyond genetic counseling students. Students should refer to the absence policy in the Clinical Rotation Manual for more information.

## CLASS DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

At the beginning of each year, UAB Genetic Counseling Program students and faculty review the class discussion guidelines listed below. Students may suggest edits to the guidelines at that time. Once guidelines are agreed upon, students and faculty will adhere to the guidelines in all classes. The standard guidelines are listed below.

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting
- Allow everyone the opportunity to speak
- Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups
- Avoid inflammatory language, including name-calling
- Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know others' thinking or motivations
- Connect back to the course concepts whenever possible
- Don't expect any individuals to speak on behalf of their gender, ethnic group, class, status, sexual orientation, etc (or the groups we perceive them to be a part of)
- Embrace discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure
- Class is a safe space to share your thoughts and ideas; but know that your thoughts and ideas may be respectfully challenged
- Do not assume silence=agreement or disagreement

## TEXTBOOKS

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

### Required Program Textbooks

TITLE	AUTHOR(S)	ISBN-13	COURSE
Facilitating the Genetic Counseling Process: Practice Based skills, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Patricia McCarthy-Veach, Bonnie S. LeRoy, Nancy P. Callahan	978-3-319-74798-9	GC 510, 506
The Practical Guide to The Genetic Family History, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition	Robin L. Bennett	978-0-470-04072-0	GC 510, 506
Foundations of Perinatal Genetic Counseling	Amber Mathiesen and Kali Roy	978-0-190-68109-8	GC 504
A Guide to Genetic Counseling, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition	Wendy Ulmann, Jane Schuette, Beverly Yasher	978-0-470-17965-9	GC 510, 506
Counseling about Cancer: Strategies for Genetic Counseling	Katherine Schneider	0-471-37036-3	GC 505, Cancer Rotation
Practical Genetic Counseling, 8 <sup>th</sup> edition	Peter Harper	1444183745	GC 501
Genetic Counseling Practice: Advanced Concepts and Skills, 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition	Bonnie S. LeRoy, Patricia McCarthy-Veach, and Nancy P. Callanan	978-1119529859	GC 506 and GC 600
Genetic Counseling Research	I. M. Macfarlane, P. McCarthy Veach, and B. S. LeRoy	978-0-19-935909-7	GC 698
Thompson and Thompson Genetics in Medicine, 8 <sup>th</sup> edition	R. Nussbaum, R. McInness, and H. Willard	978-1-4377-0696-3	GC 725

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

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

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

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

## 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. GC 501) should be in the upper right hand corner of the first page
- Double spaced
- 12 point Times New Roman or 11 point Calibri font
- Typed on 8 ½ x 11 inch white paper
- 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

## CANVAS LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Course updates, syllabi, assignments, tests and more are found in a Canvas Learning shell for each course. All students are required to utilize Canvas for course materials as the instructor will not provide individual copies of materials. Slides for each course may be posted on the course Canvas site with permission of the lecturer. You are not allowed to reproduce or use any slides provided in the program 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 semester.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

All course work exchange will occur through the UAB learning management system, Canvas. Please visit the UAB eLearning and Professional Studies for the current technical standards <https://www.uab.edu/online/get-started/technical-requirements>. All students are required to have a webcam and microphone to attend online courses.

## CANVAS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

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

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

## TEACHING & COURSE EVALUATIONS

The UAB GCTP and the university administer IDEA teaching and course evaluations at the end of each semester. This is an opportunity for students to share with faculty their experience with the course. This information is used to modify course content and for accreditation purposes. All surveys are anonymous and voluntary. Due to the small cohort size of the program each student is **strongly** encouraged to participate in order to get an accurate assessment of the content and quality of the program.

## GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING

For a student to maintain good academic standing in the Graduate School, a grade point average of at least 3.0 (B average) and overall satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses are required. Satisfactory performance on pass/not pass courses is defined as the earning of at least as many hours of P grades as hours of NP grades combined. (SECTION 6, POLICY 1, GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY LISTINGS)

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

## PROBATION & DISMISSAL

Students who are admitted on probation must demonstrate their ability to perform at the level required for graduation by establishing good academic standing at the end of the term when their graduate semester hours attempted equal, or first exceed, 12. Students who do not accomplish this level of performance may be dismissed from the UAB Graduate School.

A degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking graduate student who has been in good academic standing, but who at the end of any regular term fails to meet the criteria to continue in good academic standing, will be placed on probation. Such a student must re-establish good academic standing within the next two regular terms of graduate study undertaken. Students who do not accomplish this level of performance may be dismissed from the UAB Graduate School.

The rules stated above govern university probation and dismissal, administered by the Graduate School. Individual graduate programs may establish and administer program probation and dismissal governed by stricter requirements. In general, a student's retention in a specific graduate program is contingent on the faculty's belief that the student is likely to complete the program successfully. If the faculty ceases to hold this belief, the student may be dismissed from the program. (SECTION 6, POLICY 3, GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY LISTINGS)

## PROGRAM SPECIFIC POLICIES

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

A student will be at risk to be dismissed from the program if:

- a student fails two GC courses
- a student fails the same GC or non-GC course twice
- a student fails a course due to academic misconduct

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

**NOTE:** Re-applicants for re-admission to the program will be evaluated on the same criteria as a "first-time" applicant, and the program does not guarantee that the student's re-admission will be granted.

## GRADES

The grade of A is used to indicate superior performance, B for adequate performance, and C for performance only minimally adequate for a graduate student. Any graduate student completing a course at the 500 level or above with a performance below the C level will receive a grade of F, since the Graduate School does not use the grade of D. (SECTION 4, POLICY 1, GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY LISTINGS)

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

The student's grade point average is calculated by dividing the total quality points earned by the semester hours attempted. Semester hours attempted is defined as the total semester hours for any course in which the student was registered on a regular basis and receives an A, B, C, F, or WF. Quality points are awarded as follows:

Quality Points	Letter Grade
4	A
3	B
2	C
None	P, NP, F, or WF

Students are not allowed to share their assignment or course grades with one another. The UAB GCTP encourages a non-competitive environment and sharing grades is counter-productive to student progress.

## SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS

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

A student who receives a grade of "F" in any course or clinical rotation will meet with the program director to review the student's overall performance in the program and potential options for continuing in the program. If the program director determines the student cannot meet the standards of the Genetic Counseling Program, the student will be dismissed from the program per UAB Graduate School policy. If it is deemed appropriate for a student to continue in the program, the student will be required to repeat the course the next time the course is offered or an acceptable course substitution to

satisfy the learning objectives of the course and program. The student must formally register for the course and is responsible for all associated tuition and fees for the course. As many courses for the genetic counseling program are only offered at specific times during the academic year, repeating a course could result in a delay of graduation for the student and impact their clinical training schedule. Students will receive a letter that outlines the impact of repeating a course on their clinical training schedule and the academic expectations for the student to continue in the program.

## TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE CLASSROOM

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

“The use of any personal computational or communications devices in the classroom, not otherwise governed by UAB or course policies, is subject to the approval of the instructor. This includes (but is not limited to) the use of calculators, computers, personal digital assistants, text pagers, and cell phones.

**Any such devices without instructor approval are not permitted.**

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

## APPLICATION FOR DEGREE

Each candidate for a master’s degree must signify the intention to complete the requirements by a particular graduation date by completing the online application for degree in the graduation planning system. Because this form is used to check completion of requirements, order the diploma, and enter the student in the commencement program, the online form must be completed by the deadline provided online (<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/deadline-dates>). This deadline is typically in January of Y2. Students must be registered for at least 3 semester hours of graduate work in the semester they plan to graduate. (SECTION 9, POLICY 7, GRADATE SCHOOL POLICY LISTINGS). For the UAB GCTP, the faculty approval of the student’s application for degree serves as an indication that they are ready to graduate from the UAB GCTP at the end of the semester. If the program faculty do not think the student will successfully complete the program by the end of the semester, an individual meeting with that student will be scheduled by the program faculty to discuss their options.

**NOTE: The issuing of the MS degree is not contingent upon the student passing any type of external certification or licensure examination. Students having successfully completed the program are eligible to sit for certifying and licensing examinations.**

## CLINICAL TRAINING

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

**One 2-3-week summer laboratory rotation**

**One 4-6-week summer clinical rotation**

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

Rotation types can include prenatal, pediatric, specialty clinics, cancer, adult, and research genetic counseling. There are 4 required *clinical* rotations (prenatal, pediatric, cancer, and specialty/adult) and one required *laboratory* rotation. Rotations are designed so that students can use one of their clinical rotations to develop an area of personal interest, to gain the type of logbook cases still needed, or for remediation as needed. Students will incorporate their clinical experiences from rotations into their second-year courses through teaching and reflection on the genetic counseling process. Documentation for clinical experience will consist of performance evaluations and the internal program logbook (See eValue). Rotation hours are represented as credit hours, and syllabi and grades exist for each rotation.

Rotation I	Rotation II	Rotation III	Rotation IV	Rotation V
Summer	Fall, 2nd Year	Fall, 2nd Year	Spring, 2nd Year	Spring, 2nd Year
4-6 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks	7-8 Weeks
3-4 Days or 24-32 Hours Weekly	2-3 Half Days or 8-12.5 Hours Weekly			

Rotation I	Rotation II	Rotation III	Rotation IV	Rotation V
140-180 Contact Hours	70-90 Contact Hours	70-90 Contact Hours	70-90 Contact Hours	70-90 Contact Hours

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

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

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

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

**Onboarding Requirements**

Each rotation site has unique requirements for student onboarding. Common requirements include a criminal background check, drug screen, proof of immunizations, yearly tuberculosis screening, flu shot documentation, proof of COVID-19 vaccination, and sharing of personal information with clinical rotation sites. All costs associated with onboarding are the responsibility of the student. Additional information about onboarding requirements is available in the Rotation Manual and in the SHP Clinical Student Checklist on the [Student Health Website](#).

**STUDENT TRAVEL FUND**

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

## School of Health Professions- Genetic Counseling Program

**Policy Name:** Student Travel Funds Distribution Policy and Procedure

**Date Approved:** 6/1/2018

**Approver(s):** Lynn Holt, Jessica Denton

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

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

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

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

Funds for mileage will be reimbursed after they have been incurred. Receipts should be turned into CDS administrative staff in a timely manner. Hotel stays and flights must be directly arranged through CDS administration staff.

**Procedure:** The potential availability of the Student Travel Fund to assist with student travel will be included in the Student Handbook and discussed during orientation. Funds can be requested any time after successful completion of the first year in the program. In order to be considered, the student must be in good standing. A maximum level of approved funding will then be awarded at the discretion of the Program Director and Assistant Director, taking into account the financial need and anticipated overall amount of program-related travel costs for the applicants.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CLINICAL TRAINING TRACKS

Off-site clinical rotations in Year 2 may impact the estimated cost of the program and differ by training track. Students may request an adjustment to the amount of financial assistance awarded them by direct request to the UAB Financial Aid Office (<https://www.uab.edu/students/paying-for-college/>; 205-934-8312.)

## 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 (located in Clinical Rotations Manual and

Rotation Canvas course shells). Students will receive a midpoint evaluation for each rotation that is nearly identical to the final evaluation. The midpoint evaluation is not used in grading, but the final evaluation is used as part of the rotation grade calculation. Other aspects of the student's rotation grade include completion of goal setting, site and supervisor evaluations, and completion of target case numbers and roles. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate their clinical supervisor and the clinical experience. Student evaluation of the clinical site is available to the supervisor once the student enters the evaluation. Student evaluation of the supervisor will be distributed to supervisors by the program faculty after at least two students have attended that rotation site with that specific supervisor to maintain anonymity.

Students must successfully complete each clinical rotation to fulfill the clinical requirements for graduation. They also must obtain the required cases for the ABGC certification exam as a requirement for graduation.

<b>Cross-Rotation Objectives</b>			
<b>Role/Competence</b>	<b>Beginning student should be able to:</b>	<b>Intermediate student should be able to:</b>	<b>Advanced student should be able to:</b>
Case preparation	Identify applicable tests; prepare written case plan or session guide; perform chart review.	Know where to find information (e.g. databases); perform adequate lit search; assess what information is relevant to family's situation and what additional info is needed for the indication.	Prepare to order applicable tests; independently obtain insurance preauthorization/LMN, prepare diagnostic differential, and/or evaluate the indication for referral.
Collect/document medical, pregnancy, and/or developmental history	Elicit a complete medical history with the aid of any forms used by the clinic; present relevant highlights of medical history in case conference, when appropriate.	Target the medical history to the indication for referral; succinctly present medical history to the attending or in case conference, when appropriate.	Recognize emerging elements of the medical history that may support an existing diagnosis or lead to a new diagnosis and discuss these elements with the attending; integrate psychosocial elements to the visit into the medical history, when appropriate (e.g. clients' feelings about past events).
Collect/document family history/pedigree	Elicit and record a family history within 30 minutes; present relevant highlights of family history in case conference, when appropriate.	Target the family history to the indication for referral; finish most pedigrees (three generations) within 20 minutes using correct notation; succinctly present family history to the attending or in case conference, when appropriate.	Recognize emerging elements of the family history that may support existing diagnosis or lead to new diagnosis; discuss these elements with the attending; integrate psychosocial elements to the visit into the family history, when appropriate (e.g. grief, family dynamics, cultural sensitivity).

Risk assessment	Identify elements of risk specific to the case; identify appropriate risk assessment tools/methodology.	Comprehensively identify elements of risk (e.g., pedigree, medical data, lab data, environmental/lifestyle factors) and perform risk assessment/calculation of recurrence/occurrence	Correctly assess, calculate, and interpret risks of recurrence/occurrence within the context of the medical/family history.
Evaluate/ coordinate genetic testing	Identify and discuss appropriate testing options for the family/patient.	Demonstrate synthesis of testing logistics to evaluate testing options. Adequately prepare paperwork for discharge and testing ordered.	Help the family identify the usefulness of the test/results in their overall situation; in consultation with attending, recommend tests (e.g., specific labs) and referrals; coordinate testing when elected by pt.
Clinical documentation	Document basic case presentation as a clinic note or letter. Recognize legal importance of medical documentation and confidentiality.	Document complete case presentation and case management as a clinic note or letter	Document complete case presentation and case management and encounter, with proper syntax and appropriate readability in a clinic note or letter, in accordance with site standards and professional guidelines
Follow-up	Assist in the establishment of a case management plan or identify additional concerns to manage post-session	Help participate in post-session needs (i.e., conduct literature review for unanswered questions/concerns, identify other professionals or resources for unmet pt needs).	Direct clients to resources appropriate for the specific family's needs (i.e. setting or type of support, response to health disparity); respond to their post-session needs.
Develop counseling plan/agenda	Develop a basic counseling plan and agenda	Develop a thorough counseling plan and agenda that includes pertinent education issues to address	Develop a thorough counseling plan and agenda that includes pertinent education issues to address and use to guide a session

Educate about inheritance patterns	Understands etiology of inheritance patterns, recognizes red flags that differentiate potential inheritance patterns, and can provide written explanations of the patterns	Able to educate patients about basic modes of inheritance in language appropriate for the patient	Able to educate patients about modes of inheritance and discuss familial implications of disease.
Provides risk counseling	Explains Mendelian inheritance and risk factors relevant to the case.	Discuss empiric risk information; describe complex modes of inheritance. Educate patients about their personal and/or familial risks.	Discuss factors that contribute to risk assessment and help families incorporate risk information into their lives/decisions.
Discussion of diagnosis & natural history	Discuss relevant clinical information and clinical features; describe reduced penetrance, variable expression.	Discuss possible diagnosis; assess client's reaction to and understanding of diagnostic and natural history information. Convey genetic, medical, and technical information about the diagnosis, etiology, natural history, and prognosis of genetic conditions and/or birth defects.	Help client integrate diagnostic and natural history information into their lives and fully understand the diagnostic process. Uses language appropriate for disability awareness.
Provides medical management/ prevention/ treatment information	Can compile resources and recommendations for medical management, prevention, treatment, and surveillance information.	Aware of current medical management, prevention, surveillance, and treatment of genetic conditions and/or birth defects.	Describes recommendations for medical management, prevention, surveillance, and treatment of genetic conditions and/or birth defects. Appropriately uses the continuum of directiveness/non-directiveness.
Reviews genetic and/or prenatal testing options and possible b/l/results	Compiles organized info describing the technical and medical aspects of diagnostic and screening tests and reproductive options, including associated risks, results, benefits, limitations, sensitivity and specificity.	Review the technical and medical aspects of diagnostic and screening tests and reproductive options, including associated risks, results, benefits, limitations, sensitivity and specificity.	Facilitates informed decision making via informed consent regarding testing. Considers or makes patient aware of contributing factors such as discrimination, issues of financial or reimbursement

	Includes visual aids to facilitate decision making.		context, their values, and adheres to patient autonomy.
Results disclosure	Adequately prepares for results disclosure - including consideration of items such as timing, context of family history, age, etc.	Provides a balanced description of diagnoses and discusses positive, negative, or inconclusive test result with patient via phone or in person. Can include development of visual teaching aids or provision of educational materials.	Interprets results and discusses them with the family/pt with values and language appropriate for family. Reviews etiology and implications of result.
Research options/ consent	Appreciate the value of research in genetic counseling	Demonstrate awareness of how to identify research opportunities for patients as relevant.	When indicated, discuss research opportunities and/or consent the patient for the study in compliance with site and IRB standards
Rapport/ Contracting	Initiate the GC session. Create an agenda for the session and present it to the client.	Elicit the clients' concerns, perceptions, expectations, and knowledge of genetic counseling and the purpose of the visit. Describe the genetic counseling process.	Apply the client's perceptions and expectations of GC and the purpose of the visit to the agenda. Amend/establish the agenda based on the clients' needs and understanding, and as needed throughout the session (not only at initiation).
Psychosocial assessment	Assess client's psychosocial needs, beliefs, or emotions. Identify and record basic elements (e.g. marital status, occupation, age, gender)	Elicit and/or evaluate social and psychosocial histories to recognize and record more detailed elements of psychosocial assessment (e.g. unresolved grief, fear, anger)	Develop and/or discuss a plan with patients for needed psychosocial work, state, or needs (e.g. crisis intervention, referral, decision-making tools, reaction to illness)
Psychosocial support/counseling	Build alliance with patient/family; Use basic psychosocial skills (e.g., use empathic statements appropriately, use active listening, open ended questions, reflection,	Discuss clinical information while assessing client's reaction and gauging understanding of information; use psychosocial strategies to address client needs (e.g. build self-esteem, understand their experience, validate their	Provide short term, client-centered counseling, psychosocial support, and anticipatory guidance to the family as well as addressing client concerns. Help the client/family integrate the information into his/her life

	normalization). Attend to verbal and non-verbal clues.	belief) and to facilitate their understanding, retention, perception, and decision making. Recognize instances of transference and/or countertransference.	based on their values; integrate psychosocial activities with other activities of the GC session; use advance psychosocial strategies (e.g. confrontation, discussion their adaptation or coping mechanism). Maintains professional boundaries by ensuring directive statements, self-disclosure, and self-involving responses are in best interest of patient.
Resources identification/referral	Identify patient resources, including local, regional, and national support groups or resources. May include information on genetic discrimination and related legislation.	Evaluate the different resources/referrals available. Awareness of GC scope of practice.	Identify appropriate medical referrals independently (ie. knows when to refer for dietician, surgeon, etc.); design, conduct, and assess the case management plan (resources/referrals).
Case processing/ Self-assessment/ Reflection	Identify difficult personal issues, values, biases, and case-related issues and discuss with supervisor; maintain patient confidentiality. Seek feedback and respond appropriately.	Build alliances with members of team and outside professionals; use strategies to resolve difficult personal and case-related issues. Can discuss what went well and what areas need to improve. Accept responsibility for one's physical and emotional health and its impact on professional performance.	Critically thinks about the session in active reflection. Recognize breaches of professional conduct in self or others (e.g., conflict of interest, professional boundaries); plans and carry out a strategy to remedy the situation. Demonstrates ability to self-reflect and engage in self-care and initiative for life-long learning.

Note: The areas of competence are the ACGC education/management/counseling roles for the logbook. The rest of the table gives examples of cross-rotation expectations. It is not an exhaustive list and is intended to help guide students (and supervisors) toward understanding (and being able to effectively discuss) professional development of GC skills over time. Supervisors need to take these into account when filling out evaluation forms. It is not necessary for each student to meet each objective in order to complete a successful rotation. Fulfillment of roles should progressively advance and attention is drawn to beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills for each role above.

## CPR TRAINING

Some rotation sites require students to complete CPR training before attending their rotation. Information on how to take this course locally will be provided to students if needed.

## BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN TRAINING

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

## GRADUATE PROJECT INFORMATION

### **NON-THESIS PLAN II PROJECT:**

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

All students will complete a non-thesis graduate Plan II project. The UAB Graduate School recognizes two principal paths, Plan I and Plan II, which lead to the master's degree. Plan II may not require research and does not require a formal thesis, but a minimum of 30 semester hours of appropriate graduate work must be completed in good academic standing. Although thesis research is not required as part of a Plan II course of study, the student is expected to gain insight into the techniques of problem posing and problem solving and to use these insights to prepare a written manuscript. A plan of study/course curriculum outline is required for all Plan II master's students when submitting the application for degree (before graduation). The curriculum is outlined below and detailed in the syllabi mentioned. Completion of this Plan II project is designed to meet the ACGC professional practice-based competencies.

Completion of this Plan II project is designed to meet the ACGC Practice Based Competencies 18a-g and 20a, which state that the student must "Demonstrate understanding of the research process" and "Display initiative for lifelong learning."

Objectives of the Plan II project include:

- 1) Gaining insight into problem posing and solving
- 2) Completion of IRB training on human subjects research
- 3) Learning to appropriately cite and reference published works
- 4) Gain experience developing grammatically sound, clear, and proficient scientific writing
- 5) Demonstrate the ability to formulate a research question and understanding of research process (ACGC PBC #18)
- 6) Implement a research project or scholarly activity that will contribute to the field of genetics, with the projects' rationale and objectives clearly defined and the research methodology outlined and described
- 7) Plan and execute a thorough search and review of the literature. Read medical and genetics literature, identify resources, and generate a literature review that reflects organization, summarization and synthesizing of information. (ACGC PBC #7)
- 8) Communicate & collaborate w/ faculty committee to gather feedback, review project plans, meet program deadlines.
- 9) Engage in self-reflection/evaluation of writing and the peer review process
- 10) Display an initiative for lifelong learning (ACGC PBC #20)
- 11) Experience presenting research findings or project outcomes to professionals through oral presentation and development of visual aids. Effectively give a presentation on genetics, genomics and genetic counseling issues while assessing and determining the educational goals and learning objectives based on the needs and characteristics of the audience. Present using a delivery style that results in effective communication to the intended audience that is clear and unambiguous. (ACGC PBC #16)
- 12) Describe the importance of human subjects' protection and the role of the IRB/process (ACGC PBC #18)
- 13) Recognize and acknowledge situations that result in a real or perceived conflict of interest. (ACGC PBC #17)
- 14) Articulate the value of research to enhance the practice of genetic counseling (ACGC PBC #18)
- 15) Apply knowledge of research methodology/study design to critically evaluate research outcomes (ACGC PBC #18)
- 16) If applicable to the project, appreciate the role of statistics and data analysis, with focus on interpreting results and applying them to the research question or project as applicable

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

**OVERALL PROJECT TIMELINE:**

All Plan II projects should be completed within the 21- month time frame of the program. However, if a student is unable to fully complete their project but is making significant progress, an extension may be considered. The student must notify the program director and project coordinator in writing as soon as possible if they feel an extension will be needed. The student must work with the program director, advisor, and project committee to arrange for a timeline of the extension. The student must also remain registered for non-thesis research credit (GC 698) until the project is complete. The student is responsible for any tuition or costs associated with the course. If an extension is granted, the maximum extension period is one year. The student will graduate in the term in which he or she completes the project.

**UAB GC Program – Project Timeline**

Fall Y1	Spring Y1
<p>Library Orientation and GC Research Guide</p> <p>Complete IRB training online and required readings</p> <p>Meet with faculty for ideas and Y2s for advice</p> <p>Decide on topic/question/project</p> <p>Complete CDS 610 or equivalent course</p> <p>Receive project manual</p> <p>Project idea form due</p> <p><b>“WHAT will I do?”</b></p>	<p>Begin literature search and review – to determine sufficient and current information</p> <p>Exposure to writing scientific paper (via GC 560 and CDS 625 elective)</p> <p>Committee meeting to determine design/plan for implementation and confirm survey design</p> <p>Complete written proposal (IRB submission if applicable) describing project plan</p> <p>Confirm project committee members</p> <p>Hear from stats consultant</p> <p>Project decision form due and meet with advisor</p> <p><b>“HOW will I do it?”</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Summer Y1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GC 698 (1 credit hour)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IRB revisions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project materials development</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Literature review</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regular faculty and committee updates related to the project</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Research Paper Outline</p>	

Fall Y2	Spring Y2
<p>GC 698 (1-hour credit course)</p> <p>Implement project /plan – responsibilities for this will vary by project</p> <p>Begin to draft manuscript – write lit review, introduction and methods</p> <p>Data collection and analyze data as relevant</p> <p>Observe posters and presentations at NSGC</p> <p>Experience peer review</p> <p>Committee meeting to get feedback on introduction and methods section, and status of data collection</p> <p><b>“NOW, I am doing it.”</b></p>	<p>GC 698 (2-hour credit course)</p> <p>Write results, tables/figures, discussion, and bibliography. Complete and final written manuscript</p> <p>Committee meeting to review results and final paper</p> <p>Prepare submission for publication</p> <p>Campus research competition if applicable</p> <p>Submit abstract to NSGC or other conference</p> <p>Final presentation with committee and faculty</p> <p>Submit final electronic copy to program director</p> <p>Design poster</p> <p>Finalize IRB Report if applicable</p> <p>Recommendation for degree due</p> <p><b>“SEE what I’ve done.”</b></p>

**PROJECT COMMITTEES**

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

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

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

## **PROJECT BUDGET**

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

There are also funding opportunities through various outside organizations (e.g. NSGC Special Interest Groups, the NSGC JEMF), which have their own applications. Students are encouraged to pursue these funding opportunities after discussion with the program director and their project committee. Students are expected to be prepared to cover other project-related costs that do not receive funding, which could include cost of copies, mailing costs, survey purchase costs, etc. Students will have access to Qualtrics and RedCap (two common programs to create online surveys) and statistical software including SAS, SPSS, and NVivo through the School of Health Professions (SHP). Students will have access to statistical consultants at UAB, but students are encouraged to complete their own statistics when possible. When a student is planning to use surveys, the student should discuss compatibility and potential costs with their program advisor and their stats consultant.

## REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY MEETINGS

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

## REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Students will engage in the following opportunities each semester and turn in a log the last week of classes. Course directors may verify this information and misrepresentation of participation or attendance will be viewed as non-academic misconduct.

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

Lifelong learning and professional development are fundamental components of professional growth and development. UAB offers a wide variety of opportunities for students beyond standard course work to expand their general understanding of genetics and medicine. Professional Development Activities encourage students to participate in these offerings and are a required component of GC 560: Genetic Counseling Journal Club. Each student is required to acquire **6 professional development activities each semester** and turn in the completed log to the GC 560 course instructor at the end of each semester.

Activities that meet this requirement include:

- Attending a lecture on a genetics topics
- Giving a lecture on a genetic topics
- Attending a lecture or symposium on a related topic (epidemiology, cancer, support group, ethical/legal debates, public health, etc.)
- Friday Genetics Seminar (Schedule at <https://www.uab.edu/medicine/genetics/news-events/seminar-series>)

Notice of campus and community events will be communicated to students as they arise. Students are required to get other events approved by the GC 650 course director ahead of time. Students attending offsite rotations discuss professional development opportunities with their supervisors. **Presentations, lectures and required supplemental activities attended as a class or program requirement cannot be counted toward these activities.**

**UAB**  
**Genetic Counseling Training Program**  
**Professional Development Logbook**

**6 REQUIRED ACTIVITIES PER SEMESTER**

**Name of Student**

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

## COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

As healthcare providers and members of a university community, service to our supporting community is important and enables one to better understand the individuals in the community that they serve. We encourage students to participate in volunteer work during the program. A log of activities will be collected at the end of each year. Students will also have the opportunity to engage in service learning as part of the course requirements for GC 600 in the fall of their second year.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Information about events and volunteer needs are listed below, along with contact information.

#### SERVICE LEARNING:

Community involvement is organized through course GC 600.

#### SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUPS:

- Neurofibromatosis (NF) Walks: approximately 2 per year
  - One organized by NF Inc ([www.nfnetwork.org](http://www.nfnetwork.org))
  - One organized by The Children's Tumor Foundation ([www.ctf.org](http://www.ctf.org))
  - UAB Annual NF Awareness Day sponsored by Dept of Genetics (contact Renie Moss, [imos@uabmc.edu](mailto:imos@uabmc.edu))
- Tuberous Sclerosis (TS) Support Group
  - ([www.tsalliance.org](http://www.tsalliance.org) or local chapter chairperson is Carole Pitard at [ccpitard@yahoo.com](mailto:ccpitard@yahoo.com))
  - TS Annual Fundraiser Walk
  - TS Annual Fundraiser Second Hand Sale
  - TS Support Group Meetings: 3-4 per year (volunteers to help organize or provide childcare)
- Turner Syndrome Society Support Group
  - [www.turnersyndrome.org](http://www.turnersyndrome.org)
  - Contact local Alabama chapter chairperson for information on events and volunteer needs: Deborah Rios ([deborah@turnersyndrome.org](mailto:deborah@turnersyndrome.org))
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
  - [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org)
  - Contact the local Alabama Chapter for information on events and volunteer needs: [alabama@cff.org](mailto:alabama@cff.org) or phone: (205) 870-8565
- Cure SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy)
  - [www.curesma.org](http://www.curesma.org)
  - Contact the local Alabama Chapter for information on events and volunteer needs: [alabama@curesma.org](mailto:alabama@curesma.org) or phone:
- Check resources for information about other local support groups

## **CANCER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

- American Cancer Society
  - Volunteer Services: <http://www.cancer.org/Involved/Volunteer/index>
- Race for the Cure: Susan G. Komen Foundation
  - [www.komenncalabama.org](http://www.komenncalabama.org)
- Relay for Life (American Cancer Society)
  - <http://www.cancer.org/Involved/Participate/RelayForLife/index>
- Cancer Support Groups
  - <http://www.cancer.org/Treatment/SupportProgramsServices/index>
  - <https://www.uab.edu/onealcancercenter/news-events/events-calendar>

## **CRISIS COUNSELING/GRIEF SUPPORT**

- Birmingham Crisis Center
  - Serving unmet needs of people experiencing personal crisis or mental health issues by responding with services that promote coping, emotional health and well being. This includes Rape Response, Teen Link, Crisis Counseling, and other services.
  - <http://www.crisiscenterbham.org/>
- Community Grief Support Service
  - Volunteers welcome: <http://communitygriefsupport.org/>
- The Amelia Center (Children's Hospital System)
  - At The Amelia Center, a compassionate and caring group of professional grief counselors and support staff provide counseling and support to parents and families grieving the death of a child. Children, teenagers, young adults (19-21), and their caregivers grieving the death of someone in their life.
  - [www.ameliacenter.org](http://www.ameliacenter.org)
- Sav-A-Life
  - Faith based counseling for unplanned pregnancies (for teens and uninsured), including medical visits, ultrasound, and education regarding pregnancy and STD testing and management
  - 979-0302, [meredithmoorer@savalife.org](mailto:meredithmoorer@savalife.org)
  - <https://savalife.org/how-to-help/>
  - Involves a training class
- YMCA or YWCA
  - Check with your local YMCA. They may have opportunities for you to become involved in a crisis counseling program.
  - <http://www.ywcabham.org/domestic-violence-services-and-programs>
- Victim Services of Cullman
  - [vsoced@gmail.com](mailto:vsoced@gmail.com) to request volunteer application
  - [www.facebook.com/victimservicescullman/](http://www.facebook.com/victimservicescullman/)

## **HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERING**

- Volunteer at UAB Hospital
  - Volunteer Services: 205.934.4270
  - <https://www.uabmedicine.org/volunteer-services>
  - Email: [volunteerservices@uabmc.edu](mailto:volunteerservices@uabmc.edu).
- Volunteer at UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center
  - Callie Dunaway at (205) 996-5364 or [volunteer@ccc.uab.edu](mailto:volunteer@ccc.uab.edu).
  - [http://www3.ccc.uab.edu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=114&Itemid=124](http://www3.ccc.uab.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=114&Itemid=124)
- Volunteer at Children's Hospital
  - Volunteer Services: <https://www.childrensal.org/volunteer>
  - Volunteer Services: (205) 939-5199

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES with SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS**

- The Exceptional Foundation
  - At The Exceptional Foundation, our mission is to meet the social and recreational needs of the mentally and/or physically challenged individuals in the greater Birmingham Area. Volunteers welcome.
  - Phone (205) 870-0776
  - [www.exceptionalfoundation.org](http://www.exceptionalfoundation.org)
- Special Olympics
  - Volunteers Welcome. Phone: 334-242-3383
  - [http://www.specialolympics.org/Locations/Special\\_Olympics\\_NA\\_Alabama.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/Locations/Special_Olympics_NA_Alabama.aspx)
- South Highland Presbyterian Church
  - "Sunday Club" for adults with disabilities/psychiatric illness
  - <http://www.southhighland.org/outreach/Local-Missions>
  - Contact Genie Deason [gdeason@icloud.com](mailto:gdeason@icloud.com) (options to serve meals, prepare meals, or drive the bus)
- Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind
  - Volunteer Opportunities: (205)328-3989
  - <https://www.aidb.org/>
- Magic Moments
  - Phone: (205) 939-9372 or [info@magicmoments.org](mailto:info@magicmoments.org)
  - <http://www.magicmoments.org/>
- Mitchell's Place
  - A center specializing in services for children, adolescents and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
  - <http://mitchells-place.com/>
- Glenwood Autism and Behavioral Health Services
  - They have in-patient facilities and schools not only for kids with autism but also for kids with psychiatric or adjustment disorders.
  - Volunteers welcome: <http://glenwood.org/>
- The Red Barn

- Horse riding, camps, and other experiences for children and adults with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities or special circumstances
- Details on volunteer opportunities: <https://theredbarn.org/volunteer/> You do not need to know anything about horses to volunteer!
- Special Equestrians
  - <http://www.specialequest.org/options.html>
  - Therapeutic horseback riding and equine assisted activities to persons with physical, mental, developmental, and emotional disabilities.
- March of Dimes
  - Volunteers welcome: <http://www.marchofdimes.com/alabama>

#### **OTHER RELEVANT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Girls, Inc of Central Alabama
  - Provides after school programs for school-age girls of diverse racial and economic backgrounds. Girls Inc.
  - Programming includes: science, math, technology, career development, economic literacy, English & creative writing, healthy living, arts, sports and cultural enrichment.
  - 4 week summer camp on UAB's campus
  - Volunteers need to be college age or older. More information: <https://www.girlsincentral-al.org/take-action/volunteer/>
- Volunteer Match Online
  - [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)
- Ronald McDonald House of Alabama
  - <https://www.rmhca.org/volunteer/individual-volunteers/>
  - Individual volunteers do many different things such as cleaning the kitchen and common areas, preparing [pop tabs](#) for recycling, sprucing up our courtyard, serving as a House ambassador at community events, completing administrative tasks, and more.
- The WellHouse
  - <http://www.the-wellhouse.org/home/volunteer/>
  - The WellHouse seeks to rescue and provide opportunities for restoration to victims of human trafficking
- Penelope House
  - <https://penelopehouse.org/how-you-can-help>
  - The mission of Penelope House is to provide safety, protection, and support to the victims of Domestic Violence and their children through the provision shelter, advocacy, and individual and community education.
- Pathways Home
  - <https://www.pathwayshome.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer/hold-on-volunteer-activities.html>
  - Pathways is a United Way agency that serves 1,300 women and children experiencing homelessness in the Birmingham area each year
- Jimmy Hale Mission
  - <https://jimmiehalemission.com/>

- A multi-faceted ministry with several programs including a homeless shelter for men, a shelter for women and children, after-school Bible clubs, recovery programs, learning centers and fundraising thrift stores.
- Birmingham Aids Outreach
  - <http://www.birminghamaidsoutreach.org/>
- Impact Mentoring
  - <http://www.impactmentor.org/index.html>
  - IMPACT Mentoring provides one-on-one mentoring services to children in the Jefferson County area who have been impacted by incarceration or children with disabilities through matching them with caring, adult mentors who have been thoroughly screened and trained.
- Community of Hope Health Clinic
  - <https://www.communityofhopeclinic.com/volunteer>
  - The Community of Hope Health Clinic (CHHC) is a medical mission that provides non-emergent medical care to Shelby County adults ages 19 – 64 and have no health insurance and whose household income is at or below 200% of the poverty level.
- Good Samaritan Health Clinic
  - <http://www.goodsamaritancullman.com/volunteer/vol.html>
  - Primary health and wellness care to low-income, uninsured individuals in need of a medical home
- Firehouse Men’s Shelter
  - [http://www.firehouseshelter.com/get\\_involved/volunteer.html](http://www.firehouseshelter.com/get_involved/volunteer.html)

**UAB Genetic Counseling Training Program  
Community Involvement Logbook**

COLLECTED AT THE END OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR

**Name of Student**

Date	Name of Organization	Roles Performed	# of Contact Hours	Population Involved	# of Attendees

# NATIONAL SOCIETY OF GENETIC COUNSELING CODE OF ETHICS

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

## **Preamble:**

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

## **Introduction**

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

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

## **Section I: Genetic Counselors Themselves**

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

1. Seek out and acquire sufficient and relevant information required for any given situation.
2. Continue their education and training.

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

## **Section II: Genetic Counselors and Their Clients**

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

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

## **Section III: Genetic Counselors and Their Colleagues**

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

1. Share their knowledge and provide mentorship and guidance for the professional development of other genetic counselors, students and colleagues.
2. Respect and value the knowledge, perspectives, contributions, and areas of competence of colleagues and students, and collaborate with them in providing the highest quality of service.
3. Encourage ethical behavior of colleagues.
4. Assure that individuals under their supervision undertake responsibilities that are commensurate with their knowledge, experience and training.

5. Maintain appropriate limits to avoid the potential for exploitation in their relationships with students and colleagues.

#### **Section IV: Genetic Counselors and Society**

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

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

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

## **PREGNANCY POLICY**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham seeks to treat all students equally, regardless of their actual or potential parental, family or marital status. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex — including pregnancy, parenting and all related conditions — in education and in programs and activities that receive federal funding.

The University must treat pregnant students in the same way it treats similarly situated students. Thus, any accommodation provided to students who have temporary medical conditions will also be provided to pregnant students. Students seeking an accommodation due to pregnancy or a condition related to pregnancy must register with the Title IX Office.

The Title IX Office offers accommodations, options and resources to students who are pregnant, recovering from pregnancy, and/or a condition related to pregnancy. Additionally, the Title IX Office works with students, University administration, departments, faculty, staff, campus police, and other support services to ensure that University policies and programs foster a campus community free of sex discrimination.

To seek accommodations, please contact the Title IX Office by calling 205-996-1340 or emailing [titleixoffice@uab.edu](mailto:titleixoffice@uab.edu). See the <https://www.uab.edu/titleix/> for more information.