

**Student Handbook  
for the  
2018-2019 Academic Year**

**Master of Science Degree Program  
in  
Genetic Counseling**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this document, “the University” refers to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, “the College” refers to the UAMS College of Health Professions, “the Department” refers to the UAMS Department of Genetic Counseling, and “the Program” refers to the UAMS Master of Science program in Genetic Counseling. At the current time, the department chairman and program director are one in the same, and therefore are used interchangeably throughout this document.

This handbook serves as a guide to the genetic counseling program. Unless otherwise noted, the genetic counseling program follows the policies and academic calendar of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Health Professions, (CHP). Please refer to the UAMS CHP handbook at: <http://healthprofessions.uams.edu/current-students/catalogs-and-handbooks/> and the academic calendar published on the CHP website ([http://registrar.uams.edu/academic\\_calendar/](http://registrar.uams.edu/academic_calendar/)).

Procedures stated in this handbook require continuing evaluation, review and approval by appropriate University officials. All statements contained herein reflect policies in existence at the time this handbook was completed. The University reserves the right to make modifications at any time and without prior notice. All students are responsible for the information contained in this handbook, as well as the content of any and all other applicable handbooks and catalogs (section 1.1 College of Health Professions 2018-2019 Catalog).

## II. THE PROGRAM

### A. DESCRIPTION

The Program offers a Master of Science degree in genetic counseling, through the UAMS College of Health Professions. The Program is a full-time, day program with one cohort of 8 students beginning each fall semester. It consists of four, fall/spring semesters with one intervening summer semester session. The Program curriculum consists of 60 semester credits. Students who successfully complete the program will be eligible for the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) certification examination. Graduates are responsible for preparing for the examination, as completion of the program alone does not ensure certification. Graduates are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the applicable certification and licensing requirements for the state in which they wish to work.

### B. ADMINISTRATION

The Program is housed within its own department, the Department of Genetic Counseling. This department is one of thirteen departments in the College of Health Professions at UAMS.

### C. ACCREDITATION

The Program was granted full accreditation by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) in January 2009 and 2012. The current accrediting body is the Accreditation Council

for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), which granted the Program full accreditation in 2015. The next accreditation cycle is 2023 by ACGC: 4400 College Blvd., Ste. 220, Overland Park, KS 66211. Telephone: (913) 222-8668. <http://gceducation.org/Pages/Accredited-Programs.aspx>

#### D. HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The UAMS Department of Genetic Counseling was established in 2004 with initial funding for the Department, and ultimately the Program, from Congressionally-directed grants (P116Z040234 & P116Z050201). The Department earned provisional accreditation from (ABGC in the fall of 2005, offered its first courses in the spring of 2006 and matriculated its first class in the fall of 2006.

The Program was first established as a multi-state genetic counseling program. Four regional academic health science institutions comprised the Mid-America Genetics Education Consortium (MAGEC): the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), Kansas University Medical Center (KUMC), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OUHSC). Faculty members throughout these states served the Program as course directors and clinical supervisors. In order to develop a genetic counseling program, despite the relative shortage of genetic counselors in the region, many of the Program's courses were designed to be delivered via distance, allowing students to complete coursework off-site, maximizing the potential number of clinical sites and enrolled students.

Although the consortium has disbanded, the Program continues to use technology to connect students and faculty and for content delivery. The majority of our courses are "blended," which means that the content is delivered with elements of the traditional classroom as well as elements involving technology. The "technology" primarily used by the Program is the learning management system, Blackboard™ and interactive video.

The use of technology allows the option for some students to spend their first and/or second year away from the main UAMS campus in Little Rock. All classes utilize interactive video to connect to students, guest speakers and instructors.

### III. MATRICULATION PROCESS

#### A. ADMISSION PROCESS

The College should receive all application information and supporting documents by December 15 to be considered for fall admission to the program. Applicants must not only meet the requirements set forth by the Program but also those determined by the College. See the Program's website for accessing forms related to the application <http://healthprofessions.uamsonline.com/GC>, as well as the College website for the application requirements and forms <https://healthprofessions.uams.edu/future-students/>. These forms, as well as the admission requirements and process are outlined on the above websites.

## B. MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

The Program formulates a recommendation for admission for each applicant and then forwards the recommendation to the College's Admissions Office. If admitted, an official letter will be mailed to the applicant. If an applicant's acceptance into the Program or admission into the College is contingent upon, for example, additional coursework or genetic counseling shadowing, the applicant must submit proof of completion to the Program before registration.

Once admitted, the enrollment process begins. Registration is one part of the enrollment process and occurs in mid-July. Enrollment confirmation is sent by the Registrar via email. Students are required to reply to the enrollment confirmation email or they will be dropped from classes. Questions regarding enrollment should be directed to the Office of the University Registrar, at 501-526-5600.

Another step in the enrollment process is to complete the University, College and Program pre-matriculation requirements. Matriculating students are sent an email with instructions for the onboarding process in order to complete these requirements. This process provides students an orientation and training at the levels of University, College and Program. Students must complete all trainings and the onboarding process prior to the first day of class. Moreover, all vaccinations, health insurance, CPR training, drug screen, background check and TB testing must be complete before the first day of class and students must upload electronic copies to their Typhon Group accounts and keep all documents current.

On-campus orientation spans a period of three days preceding the start of the fall semester. During this time period, students attend CHP convocation, Program orientation, and various programs and events as determined by the Program.

## IV. PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Program requires a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours, which must include those curriculum courses as identified by the Program. Some students enroll in additional credit hours if they require an additional semester to complete their thesis project or take the course in Special Topics. All aspects of the Program's curriculum, requirements and content are subject to change. Students are required to review the schedule of classes each semester. The Program Director will distribute the class schedule to students near the end of the preceding semester. The frequency and semester that a course is held are subject to change. Some courses, including didactic courses, are meant to be delivered in a series. The Program Director must approve any instance where a student desires to take courses out of their intended sequence. The schedules and timelines in this handbook are for students who complete the Program on the 22-month plan. With permission, students may complete the Program on an

extended plan. Under an extended plan, the course sequence, clinical training, and thesis timelines are adjusted.

#### A. DIDACTIC CURRICULUM

The didactic portion of this curriculum uses a blended learning approach leveraging the learning management system Blackboard™ and utilizing an extensive and state-of-the-art interactive video network. Faculty members utilize a variety of instructional methods for delivering content. Didactic coursework is defined as all credit-based courses that are not titled as Thesis, Educational Enrichment, Clinical Observation or Clinical Clerkship.

The course sequence is organized so that most courses occur within the first academic year. The reasons for this are twofold: first, these courses prepare students for their Novice Clerkship, which occurs during the intervening summer semester, and second, students need more time in their second year for their research, clinical training, professional meetings, and job searches. The Program's course sequence is updated and published on the website: <http://healthprofessions.uamsonline.com/GC>.

**Graduation requirement:** Students of the Program are required to complete all didactic coursework in accordance with the Academic Progression Policy (see Section VII of this handbook) and all other applicable policies apply. Each course must be completed with a final grade of at least a "B."

#### B. CLINICAL TRAINING

The clinical curriculum begins with observation and progresses towards more independent work. At the discretion of the clinical supervisor and the clinical site, students may be allowed to see patients on their own, with the supervisor readily available. This is known as indirect supervision.

**Schedule of Clinical Training:** The clinical training is organized into a) two clinical observation courses spanning the first academic year and b) three clerkships starting in the summer after the first academic year. The clerkships are organized with a student's development in mind. Within each clerkship students will develop skills that relate to the practice based competencies ([http://www.gceducation.org/Documents/ACGC%20Practice%20Based%20Competencies\\_13-Final-Web.pdf](http://www.gceducation.org/Documents/ACGC%20Practice%20Based%20Competencies_13-Final-Web.pdf)).

The clerkships are courses that students enroll in for credit hours: GENC 5513 (Novice), 5613 (Intermediate), and 5713 (Advanced). Students earn three credit hours per clerkship. Each student will complete 2-4 clinical rotations (e.g. adult/specialty genetics, cancer genetics, pediatric genetics and prenatal genetics) during each of the three clerkships.

The Novice Clerkship spans 8-10 weeks during the summer semester between the first and second year of the Program and is intended to be an immersion experience. During this clerkship, students complete two clinical rotations (4-5 weeks each), generally in two

different genetics specialties. The number of weeks for each rotation is based on the preference of the clinical supervisor(s) and the number of days per week that the student is allowed to spend in the clinic or genetic office. The Clinical Coordinator works with each clinical site to design a schedule for each student that allows the student adequate time to practice the Novice Clerkship goals. For the Novice Clerkship, students have the option to utilize a clinical site outside of UAMS, including international sites.

During the first semester of the Program students will provide the Clinical Coordinator with a ranked list of preferences for the summer rotations in the Novice Clerkship, but no guarantee is made that the clinical placements will be secured at the preferred cities or clinical sites. The Clinical Coordinator will arrange all summer placements. Students should not contact potential clinical sites before first discussing with the Clinical Coordinator. The student can decline any out-of-state placement. If no out-of-state placements are secured, the student is expected to complete the Novice Clerkship in Arkansas (either Little Rock or Fayetteville, where UAMS genetics clinics are located).

Within the Intermediate and Advanced Clerkships, each student completes 3-4 rotations, based on the clinical placement options. When possible, at least three of these rotations (cancer, pediatrics and prenatal) occur in both clerkships, so that both the student and supervisor can evaluate skills progression. The Intermediate and Advanced Clerkships are completed in either Little Rock or other site that the student has been assigned to for the second year of the Program. The second year out-of-state placement options are determined by the Program, not by the students. Out-of-state placement options may vary each year.

Students admitted to the Program will have adequate opportunity to obtain the number and diversity of required logbook cases during the Program's clerkships.

**Documentation of Clinical Training:** Typhon Group ([www.typhongroup.com](http://www.typhongroup.com)) is an online student tracking program to aid students and the Program in logging and tracking each student's clinical experience. The one-time \$90.00 fee is included in the student fees and paid directly to Typhon Group by the Program. Training on how to use the Typhon website will be included during orientation. *Note: the Program has no financial investment with Typhon Group and there is no conflict of interest.*

Through Typhon Group, students will be able to update their contact information; view a directory of clinical supervisors; enter information for all clinical encounters; complete evaluations of their clinical supervisors and clinical sites; and may receive evaluations of their clinical performance from their clinical supervisors if not completed via paper hard copy.

After logging in to their Typhon Group account, each student will have access to clinical rotation schedules, required forms and information necessary to complete the clinical training requirements for the Program.

Starting with the Novice Clerkship, students begin to accumulate their core cases required to fulfill their graduation requirements and to become eligible to take the national board examination for genetic counselors.

**Graduation requirement:** Students are required to successfully complete all clinical clerkships in order to be eligible for graduation. The Academic Progression Policy (see Section VII) and all other applicable policies apply. Clinical observation courses and clinical clerkships must be completed with a final grade of “PASS.”

At the end of each clerkship, students are required to meet, individually, with the Clinical Coordinator to review the student’s clinical encounters, evaluations, progress, and to verify the completion of required documentation.

#### C. LABORATORY EXPOSURE

**Graduation Requirement:** UAMS students are exposed to Cytogenetics, Molecular/Lab Genetic Counselor, and Newborn Screening laboratories/short-term follow-up and long-term follow-up through direct observation and virtual tours. Students are also encouraged to shadow a genetic counselor in industry. Documentation of completion will be retained in each student’s program file.

#### D. RESEARCH

**Graduation requirement:** Each student must complete a research project culminating in a thesis document and thesis oral defense in order to be eligible for graduation.

**Selecting a thesis project:** The Student Research Coordinator and Program Director work with first-year students during the Fall I semester to identify advisors and projects. All research projects require approval of the Program Director. Students should have an advisor and research question selected by the end of the first semester for a May graduation.

**Thesis Advisory Committee:** Each student, with the help of his/her thesis advisor and the Student Research Coordinator, will assemble a thesis committee consisting of a minimum of three UAMS faculty members, one of whom is a core faculty member in the Genetic Counseling Program. Each committee member should contribute her or his expertise to the project. Non-UAMS faculty members may be added to a committee. At the time the committee is appointed, notification of the committee membership must be forwarded to the Student Research Coordinator and Program Director.

**Formatting the Thesis Manuscript:** The thesis must be formatted and in accordance with the guidelines contained in a manual, Regulations for Preparing Theses and Dissertations, which is available on the Graduate School website <http://gradschool.uams.edu/students/thesis-and-dissertation-preparation/>

**Scheduling the Thesis Defense:** After a student presents a complete thesis manuscript to the Thesis Advisory Committee, the thesis advisor and student (with the concurrence of the committee) will schedule a thesis defense.

**Notification of Thesis Defense.** Not less than ten days prior to the date of the thesis defense, the student is responsible for emailing the CHP Dean of Academic Affairs and the Executive Administrative Assistant for the Department of Genetic Counseling details of the thesis defense: name of student, name of advisor, title of presentation, date, time, and place of the defense for posting on the CHP website and email notifications to UAMS faculty and students.

**Submitting the Thesis Manuscript to the UAMS Library:** Two copies (on thesis quality paper) of the thesis manuscript (unbound) must be submitted to the UAMS library for approval no less than ten class days before the degree is conferred. Each copy must have an original signature page (committee members usually sign this at the thesis defense). A copy of the thesis title page and committee signature page must be submitted by the library to Dr. Susan Long at CHP prior to the conferring of the degree. The committee signature page must have verification by the UAMS Library that the thesis has been accepted.

<b>Graduation Date</b>	<b>Deadline to submit thesis to UAMS library</b>
May 18, 2019	May 6, 2019
August 3, 2019	July 22, 2019
December 21, 2019	December 9, 2019
May 16, 2020	May 4, 2020
August 1, 2020	July 20, 2020
December 19, 2020	December 7, 2020

**E. EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT**

Interwoven into the explicit curriculum are service learning opportunities, ancillary lectures and meetings, support group organizations’ activities, public speaking opportunities, and journal clubs that students participate in while in the Program. Participation in these activities aids the student in achieving the practice-based competencies involving education, professional development and research.

Activities completed in a semester must be submitted by the end of that semester to receive credit for the activity.

**Graduation requirement:** Each student is required to participate in a minimum of forty-two (42) activities by the end of their fifth semester (Fall I – 12; Spring I – 12; Summer– 2; Fall II – 12; and Spring II - 4). Activities are documented within the Educational Enrichment module in BlackBoard™.

#### F. INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (IPE)

In order to graduate from the genetic counseling program, every student must complete Interprofessional Education (IPE) Milestones in each of the following IPE phases: Exposure, Immersion, and Competence. For more information about IPE: <http://ipe.uams.edu/5-pillars-of-ipe/student-curriculum/>

#### G. GENETICS CASE CONFERENCE and GENETIC COUNSELING SEMINAR

Genetics Case Conference is a weekly meeting to discuss patients who may be difficult-to-diagnose, present with interesting manifestations, etc. Attendees include medical geneticists, genetic counselors, physician assistants, nurses, students, and other interested professionals. Nearly every genetics practice has a “case conference,” although they vary widely in formality, content, and format. At UAMS, genetic counseling students are expected to treat Genetics Case Conference as a professional requirement. In other words, attendance is required, avoid tardiness, pay attention, take notes, ask questions and dress professionally.

Genetic Counseling Seminar is an opportunity to discuss topics that relate to the genetic counseling profession and student success. In this setting, we discuss peer-reviewed literature, difficult cases, watch relevant movies, and discuss books. A schedule of meeting dates is provided each semester.

#### H. STUDENT SUPPORT

Students are required to meet with the Program Director or Assistant Program Director twice per semester in Fall I, Spring I and Fall II, and once in Spring II. The purpose of these meetings is to identify any major stressors or situations that may affect a student’s academic success. If identified early, resources can be accessed, which may mitigate negative impact on academic performance.

Additional resources include the Student Success Center (<http://studentsuccess.uams.edu/>) and various health and wellness services listed in Sections 4.8 of the CHP 2018-2019 Catalog/Handbook: <http://healthprofessions.uams.edu/current-students/catalogs-and-handbooks/>

**Requirement:** Meet with the Program Director or Assistant Program Director per the above schedule.

#### I. TIME FRAME

Genetic counseling students are time-limited by the academic progression policies. The degree is not granted until after successful completion of all graduation requirements. A student may need an extension to repeat a course that is only offered in certain semesters; to accommodate a leave of absence; or to finish the thesis project. Students have up to 4 years from the date of matriculation to complete all graduation requirements. Students who enroll in thesis credits (6 required for graduation), may be granted a grade of “IP” if

they need an extension and are demonstrating progress. “IP” grades must be converted to a final grade within two consecutive semesters. If the thesis project is incomplete at that time, the student will receive a non-passing grade for those thesis credit hours. This may result in either dismissal from the program or retaking the thesis credits. If a student is allowed to retake the thesis credits, the student will not be granted another “IP” and must receive the earned grade at the end of the semester.

#### J. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

All students will sit for a comprehensive examination (written and oral) that is based upon the skills and knowledge a student entering the Advanced Clerkship should possess. This assessment will occur within the first five weeks of the student’s final semester or at the beginning of the Advanced Clerkship. Any questions or concerns that faculty members may have regarding the student’s skills or knowledge will be conveyed to the student verbally and in writing. Students will be given an opportunity to address the areas of concern. A student must receive a grade of 80% or better to pass the examination.

**Graduation requirement:** Passing the comprehensive examination is required for successful completion of the program.

#### K. STUDENT PORTFOLIO

Each student’s portfolio is a compilation of the student’s creative work, clinical training and accomplishments during graduate school. The Program maintains complete portfolios for each student for the purposes of accreditation. Students are encouraged to maintain copies of their work, as well.

**Required components** of the portfolio include:

- Clinical training documentation
  - Supervised clinical experiences (the logbook of core cases)
  - Clinical observation experiences from Year 1
  - All other clinical experiences that did not meet the criteria for “core” case
- All presentations and creative work created for a course
- All presentations or creative work created for the Educational Enrichment

**Optional components** of the portfolio may include:

- Awards
- Photos
- Ancillary training certificates

Required components must be submitted to the Program Director or the Program’s Administrator at the end of each semester.

#### L. EXIT EVALUATION

During the last week of the final semester, the Program Administrator will provide students with an exit survey to complete. Responses help the program in its efforts of continuous quality improvement.

#### M. DEGREE APPLICATION

Students are responsible for submitting a fully completed graduation application by the first day of the semester in which they intend to graduate. A link to the current semester's graduation application can be found on the Office of the University Registrar's website (<http://registrar.uams.edu>). Information about Commencement will be available during the spring semester.

#### N. CAMPUS CLEARANCE

Campus clearance by the Office of the University Registrar is required prior to the awarding of the degree. For students who are also employed by UAMS (including work study/student worker), there are additional clearances. See section 6.2.8 of the CHP 2018-2019 Handbook.

The Campus Clearance Form may be obtained from the Office of the University Registrar.  
<http://registrar.uams.edu/our-forms/>

### V. CERTIFICATION

Graduates from the Program who have completed all graduation requirements may apply to the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) to become an active candidate for the board certification examination. Students are responsible for knowing and completing all ABGC certification-associated procedures. The certification requirements are subject to change and are available at the ABGC website, [www.abgc.net](http://www.abgc.net).

### VI. PROGRAM EXPENSES

#### A. TUITION AND FEES

Tuition and fees are published by the College and are available at:

<http://healthprofessions.uams.edu/financial-assistance/cost-of-attending/>.

Tuition and fees are subject to change. Please refer to this website for information about tuition refund, as well.

#### B. ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

Students are responsible for all associated expenses of the Program and its curriculum. The following are a few examples of expenses not covered by tuition and fees. This list may not be comprehensive.

##### 1. Technology and equipment

Personal computer, equipment, communication and technology expenses, off-campus computing and communications equipment, and its associated costs, are the

responsibility of the student. The department does not provide printing services for students except under occasional circumstances. The Student Success Center (<http://studentsuccess.uams.edu/>) has computers and printers available for use. A course in the Fall II semester requires a PC.

2. Clinical training-associated expenses

Some clinical observation and clerkship sites have rules and requirements that are in addition to those of the College and Program. Clerkship sites may require recent drug testing, background checks, or other preliminary procedures for the student to participate at the site. These clerkship site requirements are in addition to those requirements for onboarding at UAMS. The cost for these procedures and others may be charged to the student.

Access to Typhon Group, which is used for clinical tracking of logbook cases, is purchased by the Department and included in the student fees.

C. TRAVEL

The student is responsible for the cost of all course and program-associated transportation, which may include travel to off-campus locations. UAMS Genetic Counseling students are encouraged to have access to a car as public transportation in Little Rock is limited and cab fare can become expensive. Moreover, clinical experiences occur in Northwest Arkansas, Memphis, TN and Springfield, MO. It is the responsibility of the student to secure travel to these clinics, although the Program will assist whenever possible with coordination of travel so that costs may be shared among students.

D. PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Second-year students are strongly encouraged to attend a professional meeting (e.g., National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Education Conference). The Program will attempt to assist with a portion of the conference's costs, but financial assistance cannot be guaranteed. The conference and associated costs are ultimately the responsibility of the student.

## VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is important to review all policies in the College of Health Professions Catalog. These policies serve to protect students, provide expectations for appropriate conduct, and guide students, faculty members and administrators when issues arise. Also, the College has provided an abbreviated version of the Title IX (sexual harassment and discrimination) policy for inclusion in this handbook. These policies are as follows:

- A. **CHP DISABILITY POLICY** - UAMS is committed to providing equal access to learning opportunities to students with disabilities. To ensure access to any class or program, please

contact the ADA Coordinator to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting accommodations in the classroom and clinical settings. Accommodations are not applied retroactively. Students are encouraged to register with the ADA Coordinator's office as soon as they begin their program or as soon as the student recognizes their need for an adjustment.

UAMS encourages students to access all resources available through the ADA Office for consistent support and access to their programs. More information can be found online at <http://students.uams.edu/ada-disability-services/> or by the contacting the disability services office at (501) 526-5641.

- A. **COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACADEMIC APPEAL POLICY** *The Academic Appeal Procedure represents a formal mechanism whereby a student may obtain a review of a complaint related to academic matters including grades or other evaluations awarded for a course, assignment, project, examination, clinical procedure, clinical rotations, or other program-related performance. The procedures provide opportunities for students to request a review of recommendations and decisions made by the department faculty, submit information not previously available to the faculty, or suggest alternative remedies. Established college or program policies themselves cannot be appealed.*

*Policies and procedures for scholastic dishonesty or other non-academic disciplinary matters differ from these procedures and are addressed in procedures and regulations governing student behavior and discipline found in this catalog. (Refer to the College of Health Professions catalog for appeal procedures <http://healthprofessions.uams.edu/current-students/catalogs-and-handbooks/> ).*

B. **TITLE IX NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

*The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, or sexual orientation in its education programs or activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and certain other federal and state laws, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in all education programs and activities operated by UAMS (both on and off campus). Title IX protects all people regardless of their gender or gender identity from sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment and sexual violence. The full policy can be found at: <http://hr.uams.edu/other/title-ix/>*

*The Title IX Deputy Coordinator for the College of Health Professions is available to explain and discuss: your right to file a criminal complaint (sexual assault and violence); the university's complaint process, including the investigation process; how confidentiality is handled; available resources (both on and off campus); and other related matters. You may contact the deputy coordinator at 501-686-8349. You may also contact the UAMS Police Department, 501-686-7777 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency). If you are in the midst of an emergency, please call the police immediately by dialing 9-1-1.*

*The United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights ("OCR") is responsible for enforcing Title IX, as well as other federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial aid. Inquiries and complaints may also be directed to OCR at 1-800-421-3481 or [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov)*

C. ACADEMIC PROGRESSION POLICY

The Department considers the letter grade "B" or better as passing. Students enrolled in the Program must earn a final course grade of "B" or better in all courses in order to be in good standing in the Program from one semester to the next. Moreover, the College requires at least an overall GPA of 2.00, based on at least ten credit hours of coursework, to remain in good academic standing.

If a genetic counseling student earns less than a letter grade of "B" for a course grade, the course director has 48 hours (with the exception of weekends and holidays) to recommend a course of action to the Program Director. The Program Director will meet with the course director, the student, and any other essential faculty members or administrators to decide upon a final decision within 48 hours (exceptions made for weekends and holidays) of receiving the course director's recommendation.

In some instances, the student may be required to retake the course; in other instances, it may be that the student enrolls in GENC 5592 (Special Topics in Genetic Counseling) to remediate the specific problematic content areas.\* In some cases, a student may not be allowed to progress into a clinical clerkship if there is evidence of a deficiency in knowledge or skill. Retaking a course or postponing a clerkship may delay the originally anticipated graduation date. Tuition and fees apply to repeated courses and to the GENC 5592 course. As stated in the CHP Handbook:

When a course is repeated, the grade earned in the repeated course is used to assess the student's fulfillment of the academic plan. Though all enrollments, original and repeated, will be shown on the student's transcript, only the grade in the repeated course (even if it is lower than the first) will be used to calculate the cumulative grade point average course in the college. (CHP Handbook, 2018-2019, section 6.2.6, p. 49)

Students may only repeat a given didactic course once. Students may not repeat more than two didactic/thesis courses in the Program. The option for remediation may be granted to a student, but not for more than two courses in the Program.

Students must maintain a program GPA (PGPA) of 3.00 to progress in the genetic counseling degree program. If a student falls below the 3.00 at the conclusion of any given semester, the Department will place the student on academic probation. The student must achieve at least a PGPA of 3.00 by the conclusion of the semester in which the student re-enrolled in one or more required courses for which she or he did not at first earn a "B." A PGPA of 3.00 is required at the conclusion of the Program's last

semester in order to be eligible for graduation from the Program. If a student is dismissed from the Program for academic reasons, the student is not eligible for re-admission. Only didactic courses may be repeated in the Program. If the grade earned by the student in the second attempt is below a “B”, the student will be dismissed from the Program.

Clinical courses are rarely eligible for repeating. Upon reviewing the circumstances leading to a student’s clinical performance being less than passing work, exceptions to this regulation can be granted only by consensus of the Program Director, the Clinical Coordinator, and the Program’s Medical Director. Repeating a clinical course may postpone graduation past the 22-month time frame for completing the Program.

In extreme circumstances and with supportive documentation, the Program Director and Program Medical Director may grant an exception to the above departmental academic progression policies. However, only the dean of the college has jurisdiction regarding the UAMS College of Health Professions policies.

#### D. LEAVE & RE-ADMISSION POLICY

If a student is dismissed from the Program for academic reasons, he/she may not reapply to the program.

A student admitted to the Program may request a leave of absence from the Program with the intention of re-entering the Program in a subsequent semester. The Program follows the CHP leave of absence policy.

If a student withdraws from the Program for reasons other than academic issues, that student may request reapplication to the Program. Reapplication would need to reflect the current admission standards rather than those in effect during the student’s original matriculation into the Program. Approval/denial of such request is determined by the Program Director and is also dependent upon whether the student can return to the Program without displacing another student from his/her academic progression, including the clinical training.

#### E. DEPARTMENT FACILITY POLICY

The Department of Genetic Counseling is located in the College of Health Professions (CHP) Building 5, Suite G-03 on the UAMS Little Rock campus and in the UAMS Northwest Building on the Fayetteville, AR campus. The CHP building is accessible to students from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. If a student needs access to the Department suite outside of these hours, the student must make arrangements with the Program Director. Students on the Fayetteville campus have access to the building and library 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A classroom policy for all CHP classrooms is that trashcans must remain outside of the classrooms, in the hallway. Students are responsible for making sure that no trash remains in the classroom at the conclusion of class.

A break room is provided for Little Rock students in Building 5, ground level. Students may use the coffee pots, microwave, water cooler, sink and refrigerator. Students are expected to clean up after themselves. Also, within the department suite, students may use the coffee machine. Students in Fayetteville have access to the CHP student lounge areas and the lockers in the CHP area (must provide your own lock).

Use of Little Rock Genetic Counseling Department equipment and books:

- Students may work or 'hang out' in the Genetic Counseling Department during regular business hours. A student will be asked to leave if her or his behavior is disruptive to faculty members, students or staff. There are study areas with wireless internet access in CHP buildings as well as the library and elsewhere on campus.
- Do not use the facsimile machine without seeking permission.
- Use of the department printer and photocopier is allowed for special circumstances but should not be used as a student's only printing resource.
- Students may use the department "printer" for scanning and emailing documents.
- A computer with SPSS software is provided in the student work area.
- A telephone for program-related use is available for students in the office suite.
- Do not use faculty offices (phones, computers, space) without permission of that faculty member.
- Books are available for check-out. Please use the sign-out sheet posted on the bookcases.

#### F. DISTANCE EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Students have a legal right to privacy and confidentiality. To protect that right, access to any given distance-based course is restricted to its registered students and program faculty. In addition, personnel who provide support for the delivery of such courses (Interactive Video, Clinical Skills Center, Blackboard and any other delivery formats/platforms) have access as required by their responsibilities to administer the system and assist faculty and students. Students who are registered for a course will see other students' discussion board postings, presentations and designated assignments. Each student must respect the privacy of his or her peers, and therefore, not share materials including any identifying information. Should a faculty member wish to share course information that contains student identifiers to individuals outside of the Program, course, or its administrators, the Program will first seek permission from the student(s). Students are responsible for securing computers and all program-related files, software and hardware.

**Students connecting to classes via video from home\* are required to have:**

- a) a working computer with virus protection;

- b) high speed internet with direct connection to computer via Ethernet (not Wi-Fi);
- c) Google Chrome browser;
- d) an HD webcam; and
- e) a working microphone and speakers (earbuds with built-in microphone are highly recommended).
- f) Cisco application installed on computer

\*Students are allowed to connect from home in special circumstances (e.g. student is sick; snow days; etc.) or with permission of the course director or program director.

Students traveling to a distant site for the second year must meet with UAMS Video Support before the start of the summer semester to ensure that their computer meets the necessary requirements to participate in class via interactive video.

At UAMS, technical assistance can be obtained in the individual computer laboratories from staff located in each area. The UAMS Academic Affairs Student Success Center provides assistance with laptops and mobile devices. A Student Support/Technology Analyst is available to assist with various technology issues, from connecting to the wireless network to troubleshooting possible hard drive issues. The Student Support/Techology Analysis is available Sunday through Thursday from 2PM to 10PM. You can stop by or remote assistance is available. Please contact [ssctech@uams.edu](mailto:ssctech@uams.edu) or 501-526-6003 for help with technology.

#### H. DRESS CODE POLICY

Genetic Counseling students attend classes and case conferences at a medical center where patients are present. As such, when on campus and wearing a UAMS badge, students represent UAMS and should strive to dress modestly.

Students should be dressed in daytime clothes (no pajamas or slippers) and maintain good personal hygiene.

On Tuesdays, students attend genetics case conference via video and should dress business casual.

When counseling patients via video, your image on the video needs to comply with the clinic dress code.

Students are also required to thoroughly familiarize themselves and comply with the institutional dress code for each clinical site to which they are assigned. In the event the institutional dress code and the program differ, students are required to comply with the more stringent or strict code requirement for the particular dress code issue in question. Questions regarding appropriate dress should be directed to the instructor of the course, the clinical site supervisor, or the Program Director before a potential violation occurs.

The dress code is designed to ensure appropriate appearance while students are in a professional setting. Professional dress ensures a professional image; as genetic counselors provide service to patients. The dress code is also designed to show respect for cultural differences. The student's dress and appearance should not detract from the message the student is trying to convey. Students who are in violation of the dress code policy may, at the discretion of the instructor or supervisor, be asked to leave clinic, case conference or class and will have an unexcused absence for the missed activity.

In the situation of laboratory rotation, those rules of the laboratory hold precedent.

**Clinic & Case Conference Dress Code Specifications:**

- a. Good personal hygiene is required of all students.
- b. Excessive use of cosmetics, perfume/aftershave is inappropriate.
- c. Hair and nails must be clean, well groomed and properly trimmed. Hair may not be dyed unnatural colors. Nails must be conservative in length (not longer than 1/2 inch beyond the fingertip) and must be neatly manicured.
- d. If nail polish is used, it may not be black, blue, green, purple or yellow shades. All must be solid in color and the same color. No nail jewelry or nail art is allowed.
- e. Beards are permitted, but must be kept neat, clean and trimmed.
- f. Body piercing paraphernalia of any kind, with the exception of earrings (maximum 2/ear), is not appropriate to the clinic. Earrings must be professional in appearance. Visible or potentially visible body art needs to be removed or covered. Using Band-Aids to cover tattoos is unacceptable.
- g. Open-back shoes such as clogs and mules are acceptable unless specified by a clinical setting that they must be closed toe and heel. No flip-flops or athletic shoes are allowed during the provision of clinical services. Hose are optional for women unless otherwise specified by the clinical setting. Off-campus sites may have different dress code requirements. Laboratories require more stringent shoe requirements for safety purposes.
- h. Any pants/skirt/shirt combination must cover the midriff when arms are raised and also cover the back when bending over. No excessively baggy pants (crotch of pants to the knees, or riding excessively low on the hips), nor any clothing allowing undergarments to be visible are permitted.
- i. Skirts should be at or below the knees.
- j. No denim jeans, shorts or jackets. All clothing must be in good condition.
- k. Low-cut tops, tube tops, halter tops, tank tops or shirts that show-through are not allowed. All tops must have straps that are at least 3" wide. Tops should not be too tight so as to gap in the front.
- l. Shirts for men must have collars. No Hawaiian or other "loud prints." For men, ties are mandatory when seeing patients.
- m. No gum chewing is permitted during clinical training or laboratory rotation.

I. IDENTIFICATION BADGE POLICY

Students must wear UAMS student ID badges in a visible location at all times while on campus. While attending a clinical site, the student must wear that site's issued ID badge and/or the UAMS student ID badge, whatever is directed by the site supervisor.

#### J. CLASSROOM & VIDEO ETIQUETTE

The UAMS Program recognizes the benefits and limitations of technology. Any type of technology, smart phones, video communication products (Skype), social media (Facebook, SnapChat, etc...) can be used to augment or to interfere with learning, and can, in some circumstances interfere with relationships. Therefore, the Program does not allow video communication products to substitute for an unexcused absence. Moreover, some professors will ask that you turn off cell phones in class, whereas others will use applications during class. Check your course syllabi for details. **In no circumstances should students be on social media while in class.**

Some professors use pictures and information about real patients during class lectures and discussions. Therefore, you must receive permission from the instructor before making ANY recording of a class.

Participation is expected in all learning environments (classroom, clinic, case conference, etc.). A participatory student is one who listens, reads, completes assignments, asks questions, reflects, and shares with faculty and classmates her discoveries and insights. Genetic counselors do not work in isolation (even if they are the only genetic counselor in the practice!). Genetic counselors work with other professionals, in corporate or healthcare systems, and are often the only genetics expert on the team. Since participation is expected in the "real world," we expect our students to cultivate this skill throughout their graduate career.

#### **Video etiquette:**

- Be dressed as you would if you were on site.
- Do not join classes or case conference from coffee shops or other public places unless you have complete privacy (visual and audio).
- Be seated at a desk or table. If you are too sick or tired to get out of bed, do not join class by video. You will be considered absent from class or case conference. Student may have an excused absence with permission of instructor.
- Remove distractions (visual and audio). This includes but is not limited to pets, messy closets or offensive posters/artwork in the background, etc. If there are distracting noises on your end, mute your microphone.
- You must be seen (video on & make sure the lighting is good so the other participants and instructors can see you).
- Look into the camera.
- Refrain from eating while on camera. Your image is quite large in the classroom or conference room.

#### K. FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Final examinations are held at the regularly scheduled day/time of the course during finals week or at a time determined by the Course Director and Program Director. For second year students, final exam dates may take place later in the semester to allow for an adequate number of weeks for clinical training. All changes to final examination dates and/or times must have approval from the Program Director.

#### L. WRITING

The Program uses American Psychological Association (APA) style for writing clearly and concisely; mechanics in scientific writing (punctuation, capitalization, tense, etc.); displaying results (tables, figures, etc.); and crediting sources (quoting, paraphrasing, in text citations, and reference lists).

#### M. PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct. Students are responsible for avoiding plagiarism. This pertains to but is not limited to assignments, power point presentations, examinations, and thesis. Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. See sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the CHP Catalog/Handbook for a definition of plagiarism, the CHP policy and discipline actions that may be taken.

#### N. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

The Program Director is available via email, text, cell phone, and office visit (in person or video conference). Never hesitate to contact the Program Director if there is a crisis, even if it is after business hours. Faculty contact information is provided in each course syllabus, and the Clinical Coordinator provides all clinic and clinical supervisor contact information in the clinical rotation materials in Typhon Group. Additional key points about communication within the Department include:

- Each Genetic Counseling Seminar will begin with announcements, business items, and Q&A.
- Students are encouraged to bring any concerns to the attention of the Program Director, Assistant Program Director, or Medical Director.
- The Program Director, Executive Assistant, and faculty use the Microsoft Outlook calendar system.
- There is a Genetic Counseling Training Program outlook calendar that all students, faculty, and clinical supervisors within the UAMS system have access to and should review regularly for important dates/deadlines, etc.
- Department faculty meet monthly, all faculty (regular and adjuncts) meet once per semester, and the program's Advisory Board meets several times a year. Dates and times of these meetings are available upon request.

## VIII. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Activity	Description	Date Complete	PD / Asst PD Verification Signature	Date Approved
<b>Clinical Training: Clerkship Check-out</b>				
Novice Clerkship	Documentation of clinical encounters submitted to the Clinical Coordinator			
Intermediate Clerkship				
Advanced Clerkship				
<b>Laboratory Experiences</b>				
Cytogenetics Lab	Virtual tour of cyto laboratory			
Molecular Lab	Complete the molecular lab assignments and work with the lab genetic counselor			
Newborn Screening Lab	Tour a newborn screening lab; meet with the NBS program staff; and observe in the long-term follow-up program when possible			
<b>Research</b>				
Thesis	Thesis submitted to the UAMS library or completion of a submission-ready journal article			
<b>Educational Enrichment</b>				
Fall Year 1	Complete 12 activities			
Spring Year 1	Complete 12 activities			
Summer Semester	Complete 2 activities			
Fall Year 2	Complete 12 activities			
Spring Year 2	Complete 4 activities			
<b>Comprehensive Examination</b>				
Comprehensive Exam	Passing score on a comprehensive exam			
<b>Interprofessional Education</b>				
Phase I	Exposure (Fall-I)			
	Transition activity (Fall-I)			
Phase II	Immersion proposal (Spring-I)			
	Transition activity (Spring-I)			
Phase III	Competency activity (Fall II or Spring II)			