

**Student Handbook
for the
2020 - 2021 Academic Year**

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

Department of Genetic Counseling
CHP 5, Suite G-03
4301 West Markham Street, Mail # 836 Little Rock,
Arkansas 72205
Phone: 501-526-7700
Facsimile: 501-686-5716
Website: <http://healthprofessions.uamonline.com/GC>

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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 chair 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 2020 – 2021 UAMS Academic Catalog 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/).

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 the 2020 – 2021 UAMS Academic 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 eight students beginning each fall semester. It consists of four, fall/spring semesters with one intervening summer semester session. The Program curriculum consists of 59 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 eleven 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 the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, Inc., 7918 Jones Branch Drive, Ste. 300, McLean, VA 22102. Telephone: (703) 506-7667.

<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.

Initially, the Program was 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 live interactive video (e.g. Zoom).

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 live interactive video to connect to students, guest speakers and instructors.

In 2018, the program expanded to Northwest Arkansas and admitted its first cohort of students to complete the first and second years of the program at the UAMS Northwest campus.

III. MATRICULATION PROCESS

A. ADMISSION PROCESS

The Program participates in the Genetic Counseling Admissions Match (GC Admissions Match) along with other genetic counseling graduate programs in North America. The match is performed by National Matching Services, Inc. (NMS) <https://natmatch.com/gcadmissions/>

Applicants must be registered with NMS for the GC Admissions Match. 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, processes and deadlines are outlined on the above websites.

B. MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Following the GC Admissions Match, an official letter will be mailed to each applicant who matches with the Program. If an applicant's acceptance into the Program or admission into the College is contingent upon, for example, completing a required prerequisite course, 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 emailed 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. All vaccinations, health insurance, 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. Students are required to have CPR training. Incoming students are encouraged to complete CPR training prior to the first day of class, but options to complete this on campus (Little Rock or Fayetteville) within the first month of classes will be coordinated by the Program. Students are responsible for the cost associated with training.

Orientation (either in person or virtual via Zoom) is held for all incoming students before the first day of classes in the fall semester. Students are expected to attend all orientation events for CHP and the GC Program but are not required to be on campus when the orientation is virtual.

IV. PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS The Program requires a minimum of 59 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. These are listed on the Program website. The Program will communicate any

schedule changes to the students. The frequency and semester that a course is held are subject to change. Some courses, including didactic courses, are meant to be completed 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, fieldwork experiences, 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 live interactive video (e.g. Zoom or Cisco). 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, Clinical Observation or Clinical Clerkship (*note – these last two course names are a holdover from the old ACGC Standards. While named as clinical courses, they encompass both clinical and non-clinical fieldwork experiences*).

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, fieldwork experiences, professional meetings, and job searches. The Program's course sequence is updated and published on the website: <https://healthprofessions.uams.edu/programs/geneticcounseling/professional-curriculum/>

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. FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES** Per the new ACGC Standards, section B3 p.21, "Fieldwork experiences must support the development of the PBCs by integrating didactic and experiential training."

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

Schedule of Fieldwork Experiences: The fieldwork experiences are organized into a) two clinical observation courses spanning the first two semesters and b) three clerkships starting in the summer semester before the second year. The clerkships are organized with a student's development in mind. Within each clerkship, students will develop skills that relate to the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) Practice Based Competencies (PBC) (<https://www.gceducation.org/practice-based-competencies/>)

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 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 field placement 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 field placement supervisor(s) and the number of days per week that the student is allowed to spend at the placement site. The Fieldwork Coordinator works with each field 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 field site outside of Arkansas, including international sites, when available.

During the first semester of the Program, students will provide the Fieldwork Coordinator with a ranked list of preferences for the summer rotations in the Novice Clerkship. A sincere effort is made to place the student at one or more preferred site, but no guarantee is made. The Fieldwork Coordinator will arrange all summer placements. Students should not contact potential field sites before first discussing with the Fieldwork 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.

Within the Intermediate and Advanced Clerkships, each student completes 3-4 rotations, based on the available field 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 the region the student has been assigned to for the second year of the Program.

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

Other Fieldwork Experiences: Students are required to have field experiences "in a variety of diverse settings that may include clinical, laboratory, research, industry, and/or other environments" (ACGC Standard B3.1.4, p. 22). Fieldwork experiences outside of the clinical setting will be scheduled concurrently with clinical observations and/or clerkships and may take place via distance learning with industry and research partners.

Documentation of Fieldwork Experiences: Typhon Group (www.typhongroup.com) is an online student tracking program to aid students and the Program in documenting and tracking each student's fieldwork experiences. 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 fieldwork supervisors; enter information for all participatory cases; complete evaluations of their fieldwork supervisors and fieldwork sites; and receive evaluations of their own performance from their fieldwork supervisors. Starting with the Novice Clerkship, students begin to accumulate their 50 required participatory cases (e.g. core cases) required to fulfill their graduation requirements and to be eligible to take the national board examination for genetic counselors.

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

At the end of each clerkship, students are required to meet, individually, with the Fieldwork Coordinator to review the student’s participatory cases, documentation, evaluations, and progress in achieving competence in the Practice Based Competencies.

C. THESIS

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. Two courses, GENC 5140 and GENC 5141 support the student in completing this requirement.

Selecting a thesis project: The Research Coordinator works with first-year students during the Fall I semester to identify advisors and projects. All research projects require approval of the Program Director.

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 regular faculty member in the Genetic Counseling Department. 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 Research Coordinator.

Formatting the Thesis Manuscript: The thesis will be formatted according to the requirements of the UAMS Graduate School with the body of the thesis adhering to a journal-ready format for submission to an appropriate peer-reviewed journal. Instructions from the UAMS Graduate School can be found here: <https://gradschool.uams.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/147/2020/05/Thesis-and-Dissertation-Preparation-v6-lp.pdf> . For formatting the body of thesis, refer to the selected journal for manuscript guidelines with the following exceptions: a) use APA style, b) embed texts and figures in the document – do not place at the end of the manuscript and c) the reference list is titled “Bibliography”.

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. A public announcement of the thesis defense must be made not less than ten days prior to the date of the thesis defense. The student is responsible for emailing 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:

See instruction from the UAMS Graduate School - <https://gradschool.uams.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/147/2020/05/Thesis-and-Dissertation-Preparation-v6-lp.pdf>

D. EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT

Interwoven into the explicit curriculum are service learning opportunities, ancillary lectures and meetings, support group organizations' activities, and public speaking opportunities 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™.

E. INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (IPE)

In order to graduate from the genetic counseling program, every student must complete all seven Interprofessional Education (IPE) activities. For more information about IPE: <http://ipe.uams.edu/5-pillars-of-ipe/student-curriculum/>

F. GENETIC COUNSELING CASE CONFERENCE

The Genetic Counseling Case Conference is a weekly meeting in which students, faculty and guest speakers present clinical cases, journal articles, and other current topics. 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 Genetic Counseling Case Conference as a professional requirement. In other words, attendance is required, avoid tardiness, pay attention, take notes, ask questions and dress professionally.

G. OTHER CASE CONFERENCES and GRAND ROUNDS

Students are required to attend when the student is on clinical rotation for that specialty and when it does not conflict with class.

Genetics Case Conference is a weekly meeting hosted by the Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) Pediatric Genetics team 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. **Tuesdays from 2 – 3pm.** To join, contact Deanna Hardin (HardinDeannaL@uams.edu)

Cancer Genetics Case Conference is a monthly meeting hosted by the UAMS Cancer Genetics team. Attendees include cancer specialists and other interested professionals. **First Friday of the month from 8 – 9am.** To join, contact Mindy Simonson (MESimonson@uams.edu).

UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation: Learn On Demand Teleconferences

Learn On Demand offers live teleconferences and recorded teleconferences.

<https://learnondemand.org/lms/home>

“The primary purpose of the teleconferences is to provide Arkansas healthcare professionals the opportunity to interact with other physicians, nurses, pharmacists and medical professionals statewide, in an effort to establish and maintain current best medical practices. Specialists for multiple disciplines contribute current expertise and management practices, often illustrated by case studies. The second purpose of these teleconferences is to provide a recurring setting in which Arkansas healthcare professionals can work together with UAMS physicians, nurses, pharmacists and medical professionals. Learning from each other, as well as getting to know each other better, will only aid us to provide more comprehensive care for our patients.”

- OB/GYN Grand Round Teleconference: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays from 8 – 9am.
- High Risk OB Teleconference: Thursdays from 7 – 8am

For a complete list see the **Calendar:** <https://learnondemand.org/events.aspx>

H. STUDENT ADVISEMENT MEETINGS & SUPPORT

Students are required to meet with either the Program Director or Assistant Program Director twice per semester in Fall I, Spring I and Fall II, and once in Spring II, for “Check-Ins”. The purpose of these meetings is to identify any major stressors or situations that may affect a student’s academic success, track the student’s progress in the program, and identify opportunities for the student. If concerns are identified early, resources can be accessed, which may mitigate negative impacts on academic performance. **Requirement:** Meet with the Program Director or Assistant Program Director per the above schedule.

Additional resources include the Student Success Center (<http://studentsuccess.uams.edu/>) and various health and wellness services listed in the 2020 – 2021 UAMS Academic Catalog at: <http://healthprofessions.uams.edu/current-students/catalogs-and-handbooks/>

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. With approval from the Program Director, students have up to 4 years from the date of matriculation to complete all graduation requirements. This is generally only considered for students who have had extenuating circumstances arise during their graduate training. 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 who matriculate during or after August 2020 will sit for a two-part comprehensive examination. A student must earn at least an 80% on both parts to pass an examination.

Part A

Exam items cover the skills and knowledge addressed during the first two semesters of the Program. The exam is 100 multiple choice questions in ExamSoft. Students will have 2 hours to complete the exam.

Exam A1 (Spring I semester after final exams).

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

Score <75% - Fail - the student will have to enroll in GENC 5592 Special Topics in Genetic Counseling for 1 credit, which will be a tailored remediation plan for the student to complete by the end of the summer semester. At the end of June the student will take examination A2

Exam A2 (mid-June)

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

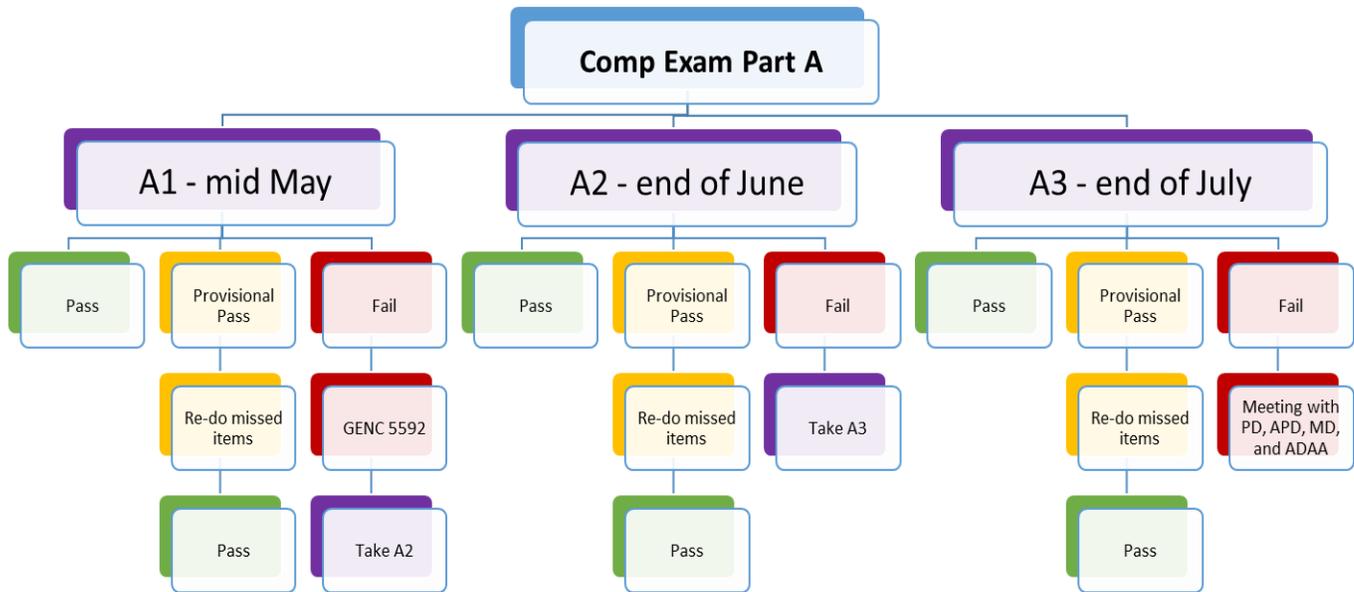
Score <75% - Fail - the student will take A3 at the end of July

Exam Part A.3 (mid-July)

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

Score <75% - Fail Special Topics^



Part B

Exam items cover the skills and knowledge addressed during the first four semesters of the Program - skills and knowledge a student entering the Advanced Clerkship should possess. The exam is 200 multiple choice questions in ExamSoft. The exam is broken into 2 sections – section 1 (100 items, 2 hours) and section 2 (100 items, 2 hours). Students will have a 30min break between sections.

Exam B1 (end of Fall II after final exams).

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

Score <75% - Fail - the student will have to enroll in GENC 5592 Special Topics in Genetic Counseling for 1 credit, which will be a tailored remediation plan for the student to complete by the end of the Spring II semester. At the end of February, the student will take Exam B2.

Exam B2 (end of February)

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

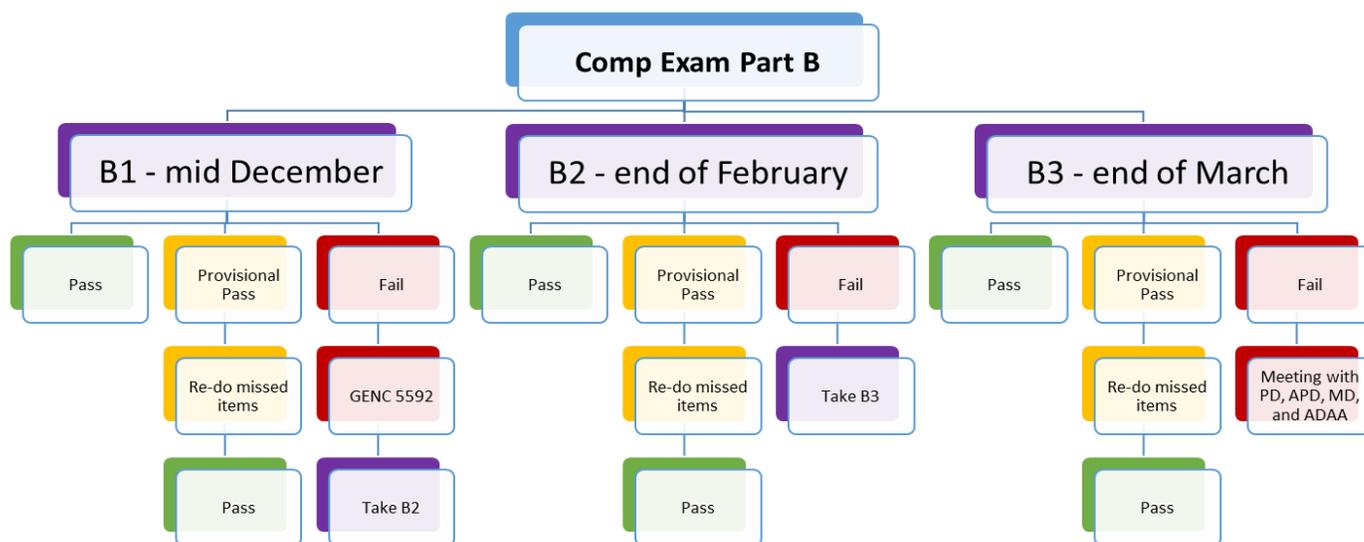
Score <75% - Fail - the student will take B3.

Exam B3 (end of March)

Score 80% or higher – Pass

Score 75 – 79% - Provisional Pass*

Score <75% - Fail Special Topics^



*Provisional Pass – students will address all missed items through a take-home/open-note format. Must answer all questions correctly to pass.

^If the student does not pass either A3 or B3, the student will fail Special Topics. The student will meet with the Program Director, Assistant Program Director, a Co-Medical Director and the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs to determine the consequences, which may include dismissal from the program.

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

K. STUDENT PORTFOLIO

Achievement of the Practice Based Competencies (PBCs) Throughout their time in the program, students will document their attainment of the PBCs in their portfolio.

The Program maintains complete portfolios for each student in Box for the purposes of accreditation. Students are expected to regularly upload documents to their portfolios in Box. Students are encouraged to maintain copies of their work, as well.

The portfolio will contain:

- A. PBC Reflection and Summary Form
- B. Fieldwork training documentation
 - Supervised fieldwork experiences (the logbook of participatory cases)
 - Clinical observation experiences from Year 1
 - Evaluations of the student’s fieldwork performance (PDFs of evaluations in Typhon)
 - Summary of all cases from Typhon
 - Medical Documentation (deidentified) and feedback (pdfs from Typhon)

- C. Creative Works
 - Projects and presentations for courses
 - Projects created for the Educational Enrichment
- D. Teaching Experiences (including but not limited to the following):
 - Educational presentations to various populations of learners;
 - Peer education presentations;
 - Formal teaching assistant experience;
 - Class exercises or projects to develop patient, professional, or community educational materials; and
 - Professional genetics presentations such as journal clubs, research seminars, platform or poster presentations.
- E. Thesis
 - Final Manuscript
 - Thesis Defense Presentation
 - Local / National Presentation(s)
- F. Accomplishments / Awards / Scholarships / Grants
- G. Miscellaneous Documents
 - Training certificates
 - Photos
 - Other publications

L. DEGREE APPLICATION

Students must submit a Graduation Application via Gateway for UAMS Students (GUS) for the term in which they intend to graduate. The application is available in GUS under the Academics tab of the Student Self-Service area. Students must have an active graduation application in order to graduate. Information about Commencement will be available during the Spring II semester.

M. 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.

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 the current UAMS Academic Catalog for additional information.

- V. **CERTIFICATION** Graduates from the Program are eligible to 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.

VI. PROGRAM EXPENSES

A. TUITION AND FEES

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

<https://studentfinancialservices.uams.edu/tuition-and-fees-2/college-of-health-professions-tuition-fees/> . 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.

2. Fieldwork 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 updated drug testing, background checks, additional immunizations 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, Fayetteville, and Louisville are limited and cab fare can become expensive. Moreover, field placements during the fall and spring semesters may include sites that are 2 – 3 hours from where the student lives. 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 conference and associated costs are the responsibility of the student.

VII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is important to review all policies on the College of Health Professions website (<https://healthprofessions.uams.edu/current-students/resources/forms/>) and the UAMS Academic 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 contacting the disability services office at (501) 526-5641.

- B. **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/>).

- C. **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 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 coordinator at 501-526-5641. 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

- D. **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. Please refer to the UAMS Academic Catalog regarding grade point average calculations.

Students may only repeat a given didactic course once, with the exception of GENC 5592. 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.

Clerkship courses are rarely eligible for repeating. Upon reviewing the circumstances leading to a student’s fieldwork performance being less than passing work, exceptions to this regulation can be granted only by consensus of the Program Director and at least one Co-Medical Director. Repeating a clerkship may postpone graduation past the 22-month period for completing the Program.

In extreme circumstances and with supportive documentation, the Program Director and a Co-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.

- E. **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.

- F. **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 CHP Suite on the first floor of the UAMS Northwest Building on the Fayetteville, AR campus. The Little Rock 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 any student lounge areas and the lockers in the CHP Suite (must provide your own lock).

Use of Genetic Counseling Department equipment and books:

- When in Little Rock, 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 telephone for program-related use is available for students in the Little Rock office suite.
- Do not use faculty offices (phones, computers, space) without permission of that faculty member.
- Books in the Department of Genetic Counseling (Little Rock and Fayetteville) are available for check-out. Students must use the sign-out sheet posted on the bookcases.

G. 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, class presentations and designated assignments (e.g. peer reviewed 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 working computer with virus protection;
- high speed internet with direct connection to computer via Ethernet (not Wi-Fi);
- Google Chrome browser;
- an HD webcam; and
- a working microphone and speakers (earbuds with built-in microphone are highly recommended).

**Students are allowed to connect from home in special circumstances (e.g. Covid-19 related restrictions on in-class activities; student is sick; inclement weather; etc.) or with permission of the course director or program director.*

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 Analyst is available Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM. You can stop by or remote assistance is available. Please contact 501-526-6003 for help with technology.

H. TELEHEALTH WORK STATION

Within the Department of Genetic Counseling Little Rock office is a designated telehealth work station for students. The workstation contains a Cisco video conferencing monitor that allows students to easily connect with a variety of telehealth clinics utilized by UAMS and ACH.

Students in Little Rock must to utilize this workstation when assigned to fieldwork experiences with the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation – High Risk Pregnancy Program (formally known as ANGELS).

The Telehealth work station may be used for other fieldwork placements and other learning experiences as directed by the Fieldwork Coordinator.

I. DRESS CODE POLICY

On campus classes: Genetic Counseling students attend classes and professional meetings 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.

Professional activities: When attending case conferences, grand rounds, and other professional events in person or via video, students should dress business casual.

Field Placements: When participating in field placements either in person or via video, students must comply with the institutional dress code.

Students are required to thoroughly familiarize themselves and comply with the institutional dress code for each clinical and other field placement 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 field placement 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 appearance should not be a distraction from the healthcare the student is trying to provide to the patient or client.

DRESS CODE VIOLATION: Students who are in violation of the dress code policy may, at the discretion of the instructor or supervisor, be asked to leave clinic, class or the professional event and will have an unexcused absence for the missed activity.

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

Field Placement 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.
 - i. Hair may not be dyed unnatural colors.
 - ii. Nails must be conservative in length (not longer than 1/2 inch beyond the fingertip) and must be neatly manicured.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Beards are permitted, but must be kept neat, clean and trimmed.
- d. 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.
- e. Visible or potentially visible body art needs to be removed or covered. Using Band- Aids to cover tattoos is unacceptable.
- f. 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.
- g. All clothing must be in good condition, modest and professional.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Skirts should be at or below the knees.
 - iii. No denim (jeans, shorts or jackets) of any color.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. For men, shirts with collars and ties are mandatory when seeing patients.
- h. No gum chewing is permitted during clinical training or laboratory rotation.

- J. **IDENTIFICATION BADGE POLICY** Students must wear UAMS student ID badges in a visible location at all times while on campus. While attending a field placement 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.
- K. **CLASSROOM & VIDEO ETIQUETTE** The UAMS Program recognizes the benefits and limitations of technology. Any type of technology, smart phones, video communication products (e.g. Zoom), social media (e.g. 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 unless necessary for a class related activity.**

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). If you wish to turn your camera off, you must receive permission from the instructor, otherwise you will receive an unexcused absence.
- Look into the camera.
- Refrain from eating while on camera.

- L. **FINAL EXAMINATIONS** The schedule of final examinations is set at the start of the semester. The final exam dates and times will be posted on the Department Outlook Calendar. All changes to final examination dates and/or times must have approval from the Program Director.
- M. **WRITING** The Program uses American Psychological Association (APA) style (7th edition) 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).
- N. **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 the UAMS Academic Catalog for a definition of plagiarism as well as the CHP policy and discipline actions that may be taken.
- O. **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 contact information for fieldwork supervisors is located in Typhon Group. Additional key points about communication within the Department include:
- Each Genetic Counseling Case Conference 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 one of the Co-Medical Directors.
 - The Program Director, Executive Assistant, and department faculty use the Microsoft Outlook calendar system. Students are encouraged to use this too when scheduling meetings.
 - There is a Genetic Counseling Training Program Outlook calendar that all students, faculty, and fieldwork supervisors within the UAMS system have access to and should review regularly for important dates/deadlines, etc.
 - Department regular faculty meet monthly, all faculty (regular and adjuncts) meet once per semester, and the program's Advisory Board meets at least once a year. Dates and times of these meetings are available upon request.

VIII. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST (This is for student tracking. The Program will track these items separately.)

Activity	Requirement to complete / pass	Due	Date Completed / Passed / Approved
Didactic Coursework			
Fall 1	Pass all courses	End of Fall 1	
Spring 1	Pass all courses	End of Spring 1	
Summer 1	Pass all courses	End of Summer 1	
Fall 2	Pass all courses	End of Fall 2	
Spring 2	Pass all courses	End of Spring 2	
Fieldwork Experiences:			
Clinical Observation 1	Pass the course.	End of Fall 1	
Clinical Observation 2	Pass the course.	End of Spring 1	
Novice Clerkship	Pass each clerkship. Documentation of fieldwork encounters and evaluations submitted in Typhon Group. Minimum of 50 participatory cases by graduation	End of Summer 1	
Intermediate Clerkship		End of Fall 2	
Advanced Clerkship		End of Spring 2	
Required participatory cases	Minimum of 50 participatory cases by graduation	Prior to graduation	
Thesis			
Thesis Manuscript	Thesis document submitted to the UAMS library	Prior to graduation	
Thesis Defense	Public thesis defense – open to UAMS students and faculty	Prior to graduation	
Educational Enrichment			
Fall Year 1	Complete 12 activities	End of Fall 1	
Spring Year 1	Complete 12 activities	End of Spring 1	
Summer Semester	Complete 2 activities	End of Summer 1	
Fall Year 2	Complete 12 activities	End of Fall 2	
Spring Year 2	Complete 4 activities	End of Spring 2	

Interprofessional Education			
Phase I (Exposure)	Exposure workshop (Fall-I)		Prior to graduation
	Exposure bridge		
Phase II (Immersion)	Quadruple aim project		
	Simulation activity		
Phase III (Competence)	Competence workshop		
	Practice activity		
	Student educator activity		
Teaching Experiences			
Peer teaching		Prior to graduation	
Journal Club			
Case Conference			
Other			
Advisement Meetings			
Fall 1 - A		Before mid-term	
Fall 1 – B		Before finals	
Spring 1 – A		Before mid-term	
Spring 1 - B		Before finals	
Fall 2 – A		Before mid-term	
Fall 2 - B		Before finals	
Spring 2 - A		Before mid-term	
Comprehensive Examination			
Part A	Passing score of 80%		Prior to start of Fall 1
A1	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail
A2	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail NA
A3	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail NA
Part B	Passing score of 80%		Prior to graduation
B1	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail
B2	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail NA
B3	Pass	Pr. Pass	Fail NA