

# GENETIC COUNSELING (SPECIALIZED MS)

The specialized Master of Science degree in Genetic Counseling is designed for individuals who seek a terminal MS degree with requisite education in genetic counseling. The program's mission is to excel in the training of versatile genetic counselors by facilitating competency-based learning, supporting personalized growth, and immersing students in the depth and breadth of genetic counseling practice. Graduating students demonstrate proficiency in genetic counseling competencies and have accrued a substantial and diverse clinical logbook cases in order to sit for the American Board of Genetic Counseling certification exam. The program's challenging curriculum provides training in medical genetics and genomics, cancer genetics, prenatal genetics, psychosocial counseling, and genetic counseling research. In addition to the aforementioned general MS requirement of 36 semester credit hours, the more stringent and specific Genetic Counseling Program requirements include the successful completion of specialized courses, clinical rotations, a Master of Science thesis, advanced rotation exam and an oral comprehensive exam totaling 45 semester credit hour for completion of the program.

The program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, located at:  
1660 International Drive, Suite 600  
McLean, VA, 22102  
Telephone: (703) 506-7667; Fax: (703) 506-3266  
Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling Website (<https://www.gceducation.org/>)

## Curriculum

Genetic Counseling students take classes in the areas of cancer genetics, prenatal genetics, medical genetics, research methodology, ethics, and psychosocial counseling. The majority of course work is completed by the end of the first year. Clinical rotations and the completion of a Master of Science thesis research project dominate the second year. Required course work totals 45 credit hours and includes:

Code	Title	Hours
GS11 1132	Intro to Genetic Counseling	2
GS11 1012	Cancer Genetic Counseling	2
GS11 1011	Embryology	1
GS11 1622	Topics in Medical Genetics I	2
GS11 1642	Topics in Medical Genetics II	2
GS11 1082	Psychosocial Issues in Genetic Counseling I	2
GS11 1182	Psychosocial Issues in Genetic Counseling II	2
GS21 1181	Biomedical Ethics for the Genetic Counselor	1
GS11 1142	Approaches to Genetic Counseling Rsch I	2
GS11 1152	Approaches to Genetic Counseling Rsch II	2
GS11 1031	Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counsel	1
GS11 1021	Psychosocial Practicum	1
GS00 1520	Research in Biomedical Science (P/F)	1-9
GS00 1910	Thesis for Master of Science	1-9
GS11 1173	Introductory Clinical Rotation in Genetic Counseling	3
GS11 1174	Advanced Clinical Rotation in Genetic Counseling	4

## MS Thesis

Students are expected to propose and complete a clinically-oriented or laboratory research question that includes study design, data collection, data analysis, and a written manuscript. A written thesis in publication-ready format and an oral defense are required for graduation.

## Clinical Rotations

Students receive cases of significant depth and breadth in the genetic counseling arena typically totaling over 200 clinical cases, well above the minimum of 50 logbook cases needed to sit for the board examination offered by the American Board of Genetic Counseling. After completing their clinical training, students should be well-prepared, flexible genetic counselors, familiar with the needs of an increasing diverse clientele.

## Advanced Rotation and Oral Comprehensive Exams

Students demonstrate cumulative clinical skill acquisition at the conclusion of their Advanced Rotations via the Advanced Rotation Exam. Results of this exam may affect placement for final clinical rotations and/or show the need for remediation. Students demonstrate overall synthesis and application of genetic counseling material via an oral comprehensive examination. Students who are not able to demonstrate adequate skills will be required to complete remediation. Failure by a student to pass two attempts at the oral comprehensive exam will require the student to undertake extended remediation. Extended remediation from either exam could delay graduation; unsuccessful remediation will result in dismissal from the program.

## Prerequisites

A cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or greater and coursework in biology, genetics, psychology, statistics and biochemistry are recommended. However, the Genetic Counseling Program (GCP) considers the entire application when selecting applicants to interview. Additional items that are recommended for a strong application include genetic counseling shadowing, assistantship or internship, crisis counseling, volunteering with advocacy or disability groups, tutoring, peer mentorship and research experience.

An interview with the GCP is required for admission to the program. On average, the program receives 250 applications each year and interviews approximately 54 candidates. Offers to interview are extended in February after the applications are reviewed. The Program participates in the Genetic Counseling Admissions Match through the Genetic Counselor Educators Association (formerly known as the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors) and National Matching Services. Match results are typically released in mid April.

Further information concerning the prerequisites or academic requirements for this program may be obtained by writing to:

Claire N. Singletary, MS, CGC  
Department of Pediatrics  
McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston  
P.O. Box 20708  
Houston, Texas 77225  
[Claire.N.Singletary@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Claire.N.Singletary@uth.tmc.edu) or [gsbs.gcpinfo@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:gsbs.gcpinfo@uth.tmc.edu)