



Genetic Counseling Program Student Handbook

2024-2025

**Department of Medical Sciences
College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) University of
Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)**

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Section 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

History of the Program

The Genetic Counseling Program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is housed in the College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) and in partnership with the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation (MMI). A partnership was established to meet the administrative and curriculum needs of the program to provide students with a quality education in genetic counseling. The program's start-up funding was provided by five community partners including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska, Boys Town National Research Hospital, Children's Hospital and Medical Center, Methodist Hospital, and Nebraska Medicine. The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved a Master of Genetic Counseling Program in August of 2017. The program received New Program status from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling in January of 2019 just ahead of welcoming its first class of eight students in August of 2019. The program received full accreditation in 2022. Graduates of the program receive a Master of Genetic Counseling degree.

Mission Statements & Program Goals

University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)/Nebraska Medicine Mission

We are Nebraska Medicine & UNMC. Our mission is to lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities through premier educational programs, innovative research, and extraordinary patient care.

College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) Mission

The mission of the CAHP is to advance health by:

- Delivering allied health educational programs that prepare graduates to provide high quality, evidence-based, safe care for all patients;
- Conducting scholarly activities that create and disseminate knowledge reflective of the unique contributions of allied health theory and practice;
- Providing high quality, contemporary clinical care in the allied health disciplines; and
- Serving communities and strategic partnerships by listening to their unique needs to promote health and healthcare, reduce the burden of illness, work toward health equity for all citizens, and prepare and provide the allied health workforce necessary to achieve these outcomes.

Genetic Counseling Program Mission

Through an inclusive, state-of-the-art education program, we prepare competent and skilled genetic counselors who are committed to evidence-based, equitable patient care, advocacy for our profession and community, and lifelong learning.

The program has the following goals:

- Recruit matriculates who are dynamic team players that will work hard and represent UNMC well.
- Foster professional development for our future colleagues.
- Develop student knowledge of genetics and encourage a commitment to lifelong learning.

- Support and mentor the development of exceptional interpersonal, psychosocial, and counseling skills.
- Promote the ACGC Practice-Based Competencies to prepare graduates to excel as entry-level practitioners and to pass the national certification examination.
- Facilitate meaningful, exceptional research while teaching critical thinking and problem solving.
- Instill the value of compassionate patient care by promoting courage, empathy, and respect of all people.
- Create an environment of mentorship that allows graduates to become successful genetic counselors who advocate for their profession and community as well as pursue scholarship activities.

Accreditation

The Master of Genetic Counseling program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC): 1660 International Drive, Suite 600 | McLean, VA 22102, 703-506-7667, info@gceducation.org, www.gceducation.org

ACGC Practice-Based Competencies© 2019

The UNMC Genetic Counseling Program is aligned with the ACGC Practice-Based Competencies (PBCs). The PBCs define and describe the 22 practice-based competencies that an entry-level provider must demonstrate to successfully practice as a genetic counselor. These competencies guide the education of genetic counselors and assessment of competency for practicing genetic counselors.

Domain I: Genetics Expertise and Analysis

1. Demonstrate and utilize a depth and breadth of understanding and knowledge of genetics and genomics core concepts and principles.
2. Integrate knowledge of psychosocial aspects of conditions with a genetic component to promote client well-being.
3. Construct relevant, targeted and comprehensive personal and family histories and pedigrees.
4. Identify, assess, order, facilitate, and integrate genetic/genomic testing options in genetic counseling practice (including molecular and non-molecular testing that directly impacts assessment of inherited risk).
5. Assess individuals' and their relatives' probability of conditions with a genetic component or carrier status based on their pedigree, test result(s), and other pertinent information.
6. Demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully manage a genetic counseling case.
7. Critically assess genetic/genomic, medical and social science literature and information.

Domain II: Interpersonal, Psychosocial and Counseling Skills

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

9. Employ active listening and interviewing skills to identify, assess, and empathically respond to stated and emerging concerns.
10. Use a range of genetic counseling skills and models to facilitate informed decision-making and adaptation to genetic risks or conditions.
11. Promote client-centered, informed, non-coercive and value-based decision-making.
12. Understand how to adapt genetic counseling skills for varied service delivery models.
13. Apply genetic counseling skills in a culturally responsive and respectful manner to all clients.

Domain III: Education

14. Effectively educate clients about a wide range of genetics and genomics information based on their needs, their characteristics and the circumstances of the encounter.
15. Write concise and understandable clinical and scientific information for audiences of varying educational backgrounds.
16. Effectively give a presentation on genetics, genomics and genetic counseling issues.

Domain IV: Professional Development & Practice

17. Act in accordance with the ethical, legal and philosophical principles and values of the genetic counseling profession and the policies of one’s institution or organization.
18. Demonstrate understanding of the research process.
19. Advocate for individuals, families, communities, and the genetic counseling profession.
20. Demonstrate a self-reflective, evidenced-based and current approach to genetic counseling practice.
21. Understand the methods, roles and responsibilities of the process of clinical supervision of trainees.
22. Establish and maintain professional interdisciplinary relationships in both team and one-on-one settings and recognize one’s role in the larger healthcare system.

Course Sequence

The MGC degree requires completion of 62 semester credit hours.

	Credit Hours
Year 1 – Fall (14 credit hours)	
GENC 610 Foundations in Genetic Counseling I*	3
GENC 641 Principles and Application of Human Genetics*	3
GENC 645 Embryology & Teratology	3
GENC 682 Prenatal Genetics	2
GENC 708 Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counseling	1
MNED 775 Research Methods in Medical Science	

	2
Year 1 – Spring (15 credit hours)	
GENC 611 Foundations in Genetic Counseling II*	3
GENC 649 Molecular Genetics & Genomics	3
GENC 688 Clinical Cancer Genetics	3
GENC 720 Capstone Design*	2
GENC 780 Medical Genetics I*	3
GENC 708 Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counseling	1
Year 1 – Summer (5 credit hours)	
GENC 750 Fieldwork Experience I	5
Year 2 – Fall (14 credit hours)	
GENC 710 Advanced Genetic Counseling I*	2
GENC 721 Capstone Project I*	2
GENC 751 Fieldwork Experience II	3
GENC 752 Fieldwork Experience III	3
GENC 781 Medical Genetics II	3
GENC 708 Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counseling	1
Year 2 – Spring (14 credit hours)	
GENC 711 Advanced Genetic Counseling I	2
GENC 718 Genetic Counseling and the Community	3
GENC 722 Capstone Project II	2
GENC 753 Fieldwork Experience IV	3
GENC 754 Fieldwork Experience V	3
GENC 708 Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counseling	1

An asterisk(*) indicates a course is a pre-requisite and must be successfully completed before moving to the subsequent course. The Program Director will review requests from students who do not meet the published prerequisite criteria.

The sequence of the coursework establishes a foundation in genetic knowledge and the practice of genetic counseling before moving to clinical application and psychoeducational aspects of genetic counseling. Experiential learning opportunities include classroom discussions, gaming, role plays, and standardized patients. Students enter their summer placement with basic clinical experience, observation opportunities, and at least two standardized patients.

A timeline for the student capstone project was created to allow early identification of a project idea and support timely completion.

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Reference: CAHP Student Policies <https://catalog.unmc.edu/allied-health-professions/cahppolicies/>

Performance Evaluation and Progression *(formerly named Student Success and Academic Standing)*

All genetic counseling students have an Academic Standing of Satisfactory upon entry into the program.

A student qualifies for program continuation without restrictions when there are no significant concerns for professionalism in any aspect of the program (coursework, placements, and capstone), all course grades (including capstone courses) are above an 80% (B-) or “pass” (for pass/fail courses), AND fieldwork final evaluations (when completing a fieldwork placement) show the student is meeting the expected level and showing progress.

Failure to comply with the minimum grade requirements, academic integrity, or professional behavior may be cause for dismissal. See Policy: [Performance Evaluation and Progression < University of Nebraska Medical Center](#)

Academic Standards

A final grade of B-(80%) or better (or pass) is required for all courses in the program. A student who cannot successfully meet course requirements may be placed on academic probation; graduation may be delayed or denied.

Grading Scale

Letter grades are assigned based on the student’s academic performance. All courses use the grading scale as defined by the CAHP Handbook.

Grades of pass/fail and incomplete are not included in the grade point average (GPA) calculation.

Incomplete grades

Students may receive a grade of Incomplete (I) for a course in which they have made satisfactory progress, but extenuating circumstances prevent completion by the end of the semester. The student and course instructor create an action plan for completion, which should be reviewed by the Program Director and finalized by the end of the semester. A student must remove the incomplete with a passing grade by the deadline specified in the plan but no later than 12 months. If the student does not satisfactorily complete the action plan, the grade is automatically converted to an “F.”

Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation for one or more of the following:

- A failed course
- An incomplete course
- A failed placement
- A professionalism concern
- An academic integrity issue

Failing grades

Any grade of **fail** (for pass/fail courses) or **less than a B-(80%)** is considered a failing grade.

Coursework

A student who does not successfully complete a course must complete formal remediation with or without academic probation as determined by the Program Director with input from the course director. A remediation plan is developed to address the specific deficiencies in the student’s performance. The plan would include a specific timeline for completion and evaluation of student performance. The plan

may include specific student success resources. The student must remediate to the satisfaction of the course director/instructor and the Program Director as well as by the established deadline. Failure to complete remediation successfully will lead to further academic sanctions.

Any student who has two or more courses where the final grade is below 80% or fail (for pass/fail courses) in one semester will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Fieldwork Placement Progression

If a final evaluation indicates “Meets expected level [PASS] AND showing progress; NO supervisor concerns for professionalism” AND the supervisor also indicates one of the following subcategories:

- *“Usually meets expectations – Consider additional mentorship or targeted remediation of specific skill” or*
- *“Sometimes meets expectations – RECOMMEND improvement plan”*

The student must meet with the assistant Program Director who will develop a plan with input from the student and supervisor(s). This plan may require remediation prior to starting the next fieldwork placement. The plan must include a specific timeline for completion and how the student performance will be evaluated. The student must complete the plan to the satisfaction of the supervisor and/or the assistant Program Director as well as by the established deadline. Failure to complete the plan successfully will lead to further academic sanctions.

If a final evaluation indicates “Fails to meet expectations [FAIL] AND limited to no progress; supervisor concerns for professionalism,” then the student may be placed on academic probation. Next steps are guided based on the additional notes from the supervisor.

- *“Fails in some areas AND is showing limited progress – RECOMMEND REMEDIATION”*

The student must complete Formal Remediation before being placed in the next fieldwork placement. This may delay a student’s graduation. The student must remediate to the satisfaction of the fieldwork supervisor and Assistant Program Director by the established deadline. Failure to complete remediation successfully will lead to further academic sanctions.

- *Final evaluation notes “Fails in most areas AND is showing limited progress – RECOMMEND REPEATING ROTATION”*

This student cannot continue in their fieldwork placement until the rotation is repeated. This could include academic probation, decelerated learning plan, recommended leave of absence, and/or dismissal.

- *Final evaluation notes “Fails in all areas and/or shows no progress-fail rotation”*

This student will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Professionalism

A student who receives "Significant Concerns" on the Professionalism Rubric will complete a targeted discussion and/or remediation with the Program Director (or program designee). A remediation plan is developed to address the specific area of concerns. The plan would include a specific timeline for completion and evaluation of student performance. The student must remediate to the satisfaction of the Program Director (or program designee) as well as by the established deadline. Failure to complete remediation successfully will lead to further academic sanctions.

Professional Conduct

Students at the University of Nebraska are members of an academic community in which academic integrity and responsible conduct are essential for the community to function. To ensure that students know what is expected of them, the University has adopted the Standards of Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct ("Standards").

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/code-of-conduct/>

Genetic Counseling Program Professional and Inclusive Space

The Genetic Counseling program expects students to demonstrate the following aspects of professionalism (Reference: *Professionalism rubric*):

- Preparedness and Participation
 - Almost always participates in discussions
 - Contributions reflect exceptional preparation and are always well supported; does not dominate discussion
 - Uses available evidence-based principles and resources
- Timeliness and Quality of Work
 - Always arrives on time; all absences are excused; always takes responsibility for work missed
 - Consistently meets all deadlines
 - Provides work of the highest quality that reflects best effort
 - Submitted work meets requirements of rubric or guidelines
 - Submitted work is edited; there are no or very few mechanical errors (typographic, punctuation, grammatical, spelling)
- Professional Growth and Learning
 - Seeks feedback and responds well to performance critique
 - Demonstrates a self-reflective practice
 - Self-reflections on performance match expectations of rubric/assessment
 - Recognizes limitations
 - Ask for help when needed
- Inclusive Practice
 - Consistently open to expanding one's worldview through culturally curious engagement
- Collaboration
 - Collaborate effectively with peers; is comfortable taking the lead as well as encouraging others to lead
 - Works effectively with others; shares disagreements in constructive way

- Approaches critical conversations with active listening while still allowing one’s perspective to be heard
- Avoids dominating conversations; makes space for other voices
- Recognizes and respects professional boundaries and relationships between clients, colleagues, and supervisors
- Communication and Education
 - Effectively educates an audience (patient, class, etc)
 - Writes concise and understandable information for audiences of varying educational backgrounds.

Professionalism will be evaluated throughout the program using this rubric.

Appeals of Academic Evaluations

A student enrolled in a course where the CAHP is granting credit can appeal an academic evaluation.

Use of Artificial Intelligence:

Course director(s) and/or fieldwork supervisor(s) will determine if students can use generative artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool to complete an assignment. Students must reference each syllabus or placement expectations to determine if generative AI is allowed for any part of the course or placement. Any questions regarding if or how students may use this tool should be directed to the course director(s) or fieldwork supervisor(s) BEFORE the assignment is submitted.

Course director(s) and/or fieldwork supervisor(s) may prohibit the use of generative AI to accurately evaluate the student’s individual progress in the course, the student’s ability to think critically, and/or the student’s development of one or more practice-based competencies. These tools may also be prohibited if there is protected information shared during the course.

When allowed, generative AI must be used with a student’s review and input rather than on its own. Generative AI may produce inaccurate information, incorrect or made-up citations, and biased responses. Responses may also lack depth. Students must cite when using this tool and must be able to show how the tool was used.

When using generative AI, students must demonstrate ethical use of generative AI. Students must comply with university policies and not enter any institution, patient, research (including raw data in any form), or other sensitive information.

Language in course syllabi

Overview	Language
NO AI in course NO AI for text, video, audio, or image	Students cannot use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in this course to generate text, video, audio, or images for any assignments that are part of the course grade. The assessments in this course were built to evaluate the student’s individual progress in the course, their ability to think critically, and/or their development of one or more practice-based competencies.

<p>NO AI for text or writing</p> <p>AI okay for video, audio, images</p>	<p>Students cannot use Generative AI for any graded writing assignment including weekly discussion posts, patient/provider letters, and disease summaries.</p> <p>Students can use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to generate video, audio, or images for this course. Generative AI must be used with a student's review and input rather than on its own. Generative AI may produce inaccurate information, incorrect or made-up citations, and biased responses. Responses may also lack depth. Students must cite when using this tool and must be able to show how the tool was used.</p> <p>When using generative AI, students must demonstrate ethical use of generative AI. Students must comply with university policies and not enter any institution, patient, research (including raw data in any form), or other sensitive information.</p>
<p>NO AI for video, audio, or images</p> <p>AI okay for writing support</p>	<p>Students cannot use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in this course to generate video, audio, or images for any assignments. The assessments in this course were built to evaluate the student's individual progress in the course, their ability to think critically, and/or their development of one or more practice-based competencies.</p> <p>Students can use Generative AI to assist with editing/revising written work. Generative AI must be used with a student's review and input rather than on its own. Generative AI may produce inaccurate information, incorrect or made-up citations, and biased responses. Responses may also lack depth. Students must cite when using this tool and must be able to show how the tool was used.</p> <p>When using generative AI, students must demonstrate ethical use of generative AI. Students must comply with university policies and not enter any institution, patient, research (including raw data in any form), or other sensitive information.</p>
<p>NO AI at all but exploring</p> <p>**All assignments must explicit</p>	<p>Students cannot use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in this course to generate text, video, audio, or images for any assignments that are part of the course grade unless explicit permission to do so is given by the course director. The assessments in this course were built to evaluate the student's individual progress in the course, their ability to think critically,</p>

state if AI can be used or not	and/or their development of one or more practice-based competencies.
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Supporting Student Progression

Students should consider meeting with course directors when there is an exam or large assignment grade less than 80%, or if there are questions about the course content as this facilitates student progression of knowledge and skills.

Some course directors may *require* a meeting when a grade of 80% or better is not achieved on a specific exam or assignment grade—students should consult the individual course syllabus.

Students *must* meet with fieldwork supervisors and capstone committee chairs as outlined by the fieldwork evaluations (midpoint and final) and committee monthly meetings, respectively.

Program Leadership will request feedback from course directors, fieldwork supervisors, and capstone committee chairs to monitor the student's overall progression and professionalism. Program Leadership will review and discuss student progression as part of the midsemester advisement meetings. Any student who is not meeting expectations mid-semester must complete the recommendations (self-reflection, student counseling, remediation plan, etc.) made by Program Leadership.

What information is collected midsemester to monitor student progression?

- *Coursework: Course directors will report if any student has an overall grade less than 80% or a grade lower than 80% on any assignment that counts for 15% or more of the final grade. They will also report any students who have submitted more than one late assignment or if there are concerns for professionalism.*
- *Fieldwork Placements: The Assistant Program Director (with input from fieldwork supervisors) will report if any student has not progressed in the accrual of participatory cases (when in a setting with a board-certified supervisor), not progressed in the fundamental counseling roles or practice-based competencies, failed to submit the assignments as required by the course and/or primary supervisor, or failed to demonstrate professionalism.*
- *Capstone Project: The Capstone Course Director (with input from the student's capstone committee) will report if any student has not completed tasks required for the course, not progressed in their capstone project, or failed to demonstrate professionalism.*

Graduation

In order to graduate with a Master of Genetic Counseling (MGC) degree, students must meet all of the following requirements:

- Receive grades of pass or B-(80%) or better in each course within the curriculum.
- Complete all deliverables for the capstone project

1. a formal written proposal submitted during the end of the first year approved by the student's Capstone Chair
 2. an abstract of publishable quality submitted to the College of Allied Health Professions Evidence-Based Forum with consideration of submitting to a local, regional or national meeting
 3. a poster presenting the capstone project findings visually at the CAHP's Evidence-Based Forum
 4. a final capstone paper approved by the student's capstone chair, Capstone Course Director, and Program Director
 5. an oral presentation of the completed project for peers, faculty, and family members.
- Complete all required supplemental activities.
 - Pass all fieldwork placements with no concerns for professionalism and a minimum of 50 participatory cases that represent a variety of practice settings and indications.
 - Consistently demonstrate professionalism.
 - Satisfy all University requirements to complete the program.

Timeline to Complete the Program

Students are expected to complete all requirements within the 21-month scheduled timeframe. Students who are not able to meet all curriculum requirements within 31.5 months (150%) of the scheduled timeframe may be dismissed from the program.

CAHP Convocation Ceremony

Attendance at the CAHP Convocation Ceremony is strongly encouraged. Family and friends of the graduating class are invited to attend. This event is typically scheduled on the Friday of finals week.

UNMC Commencement Ceremony

Attendance at the UNMC Commencement Ceremony is strongly encouraged. Family and friends of the graduating class are invited to attend. This event is typically scheduled on the Saturday of finals week.

Alpha Eta Society

The Alpha Eta Society is a national honor society for allied health students. The intent of the Society is to promote and recognize scholarly and clinical excellence, leadership, and potential for contributions to the allied health professions. The Society's motto, "Together We Serve," reflects the collective role and value of the allied health professions. The honorary was founded in 1973, and the then School of Allied Health Professions at the University of Nebraska Medical Center established a Chapter of the Alpha Eta Society in 1994.

Students must rank in the top 20 percent of their graduating class to be eligible for the distinguished honor of membership in the Alpha Eta Society. In addition, candidates for membership must demonstrate leadership, sustained excellence in both academic and clinical studies, and a capacity for achievement in their chosen allied health profession.

SECTION 3 – ADMITTED STUDENT POLICIES

ADA Accommodations:

The University of Nebraska Medical Center takes pride in its diverse population and is committed to providing all students the opportunity to take full advantage of its programs and facilities. In keeping with this philosophy, UNMC strives to eliminate architectural and programmatic barriers that may prevent qualified students with disabilities from obtaining an academic or professional degree. Students should initiate requests for accommodation; however, the accountability and responsibility of accommodations is shared among faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities are designed to provide equal access in a manner that does not compromise essential elements of academic programs.

Accessibility Services Center (ASC)
UNMC Student Life Center, Suit 2031
3908 Jones Street
Omaha, NE 68105

Email: UNMCASC@unmc.edu
Phone: 402-559-7276

Reference: <https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>.

Activities outside of the program (employment, etc)

Students with an Academic Standing of Satisfactory are eligible to participate in paid or unpaid activities (working on/off campus, teaching a single class, joining a panel discussion, creating an e-module, etc). Students considering additional activities outside of the program requirements must discuss with their advisor who will confirm their standing as well as continue to monitor their performance in the program.

The student's schedule related to these activities must not interfere with any class or fieldwork assignment as scheduled in the program.

Advising

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who will monitor student progression in the program, provide guidance for academic support, discuss or address student-identified and/or faculty-identified concerns, and facilitate open lines of communication between student and others.

Advisement meetings occur on a regular basis. First year students meet twice with their advisor during the fall semester and at least once in the spring semester. Second year students meet at least once with their advisor each semester (fall and spring). Additional advising meetings may be requested by the student or recommended by the advisor to support student success and professional development.

Students are expected to be open and honest. If there are problems identified, then students should come ready to discuss potential solutions.

Students who would like to meet with someone other than the Program Director and/or assistant director should contact the CAHP Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Advisors will encourage problem solving and critical thinking while also staying neutral. All advisement meetings are documented.

All-class and all-program meetings

To communicate essential information to students, the program may schedule class and/or all student meetings during the academic year. When scheduled, these meetings are required and typically take place on **Tuesdays between 12pm and 1pm CT in the Fall and Thursdays between 12:50pm and 1:30pm CT in the Spring**. Students must attend unless they have an excused absence approved by the program leadership.

Attendance at Classes and Fieldwork Placements

Students are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled classes and all fieldwork experiences (observations and placements). In addition, students are expected to attend any assigned outside conference(s) and/or multidisciplinary care meeting(s) as assigned by the program or fieldwork supervisor. Some course activities are structured based on the expected attendance of all students.

Students who are unable to attend a specific activity must communicate with the program as early as possible by submitting an online Absence Form (found in the Student Canvas course). These requests are **reviewed by program leadership on a weekly basis**, and the student will receive an email after this review. If approved, the student is responsible for notifying the Course Director(s) and/or Fieldwork Placement Supervisor(s) of the absence. A student is also responsible for determining if/how the class material or assignments can be made up. If there is an emergency that prevents attendance, then a student must email the Program Director and Education Program Coordinator directly as soon as possible and submit an Emergency Absence Form within one week of return from the absence.

The Program Leadership will meet with any student who is chronically absent or extensively tardy (defined as 10 minutes late) as this can negatively impact the student's progression in the practice-based competencies. As such, a chronic absence may lead to repeating a course or fieldwork placement according to the Student Success and Academic Standing Policy.

Virtual Attendance

Virtual attendance (via Zoom) may be available for some courses and/or classes at the **discretion of the course director/instructor and/or on a case-by-case basis**. An absence may be required due to the activities scheduled during class. If virtual attendance is not available to a student who can otherwise not join, then an absence (excused or unexcused) may be required. Early communication is best when determining if virtual attendance is an option.

Base Pair Program

First year students will be matched with a second-year student mentor through a program called the "Base Pair" program. The second-year students provide peer insights into how to

be successful as a genetic counseling student. This mentorship program is designed to be an informal, student driven experience to help students adjust to life as a genetic counseling student at UNMC. As part of the mentor/mentee relationship, students are not to provide their mentee with program-related materials that could impact the grade of a student (old assignments, projects, etc.). In addition, specific information about tests and other forms of program evaluation should not be discussed. The request for or provision of these materials or information is a violation of the UNMC Student Code of Conduct.

Canvas Learning Management System

Course updates, syllabi, assignments, rubrics, and more are found in a Canvas Learning shell for each course. All students are required to utilize Canvas for course materials as the instructor will not provide individual copies of materials. Slides for each course **may** be posted on the course if the lecturer provides permission. Information included in the slides (text, video, audio, or images) may contain sensitive information and must not be shared outside the program (this includes Generative AI).

Students are not allowed to reproduce or use any slides provided in class for their own presentations or publications without written consent from the slides author. Access to each course's Canvas shell and its materials may only last during the semester the student is enrolled in the class.

Capstone Project Costs

All students are charged a capstone fee in the spring of their first year and fall of their second year. The total value of these fees is estimated to cover up to three hours of statistical analysis or other costs related to the capstone project. These funds cannot be used to buy incentives for research participants (i.e. gift cards). The UNMC Genetic Counseling Program does not have a budget for student projects but may have limited funding to provide on a case-by-case basis. There is **no guarantee that the program will have funding to supplement any specific project**. All students must submit a proposed budget for their project.

There are funding opportunities through various outside organizations (e.g. National Society of Genetic Counselor (NSGC) Special Interest Groups, the NSGC Jane Engelberg Memorial Fund), which have their own applications. Students are encouraged to pursue these funding opportunities after discussion with their committee chair and/or Capstone Course Director.

Students are expected to cover project-related costs that do not receive funding, which could include the cost of copies, mailing costs, survey purchase costs, research incentives, etc.

Class cancellation

Official University cancellation of class is announced via radio, television, social media, and alert system. Sign up for UNMC Alerts.

The instructor of record makes the decision to cancel or convert to distance format, informing students via email or course learning management system (Canvas) posting.

If there is more than one class on a specific day, then all instructors of record will determine a plan. In this case, the Program Director or Education Program Coordinator would send out an email.

Communication Expectations

All email communication between the program and students **must occur using the UNMC Outlook assigned email addresses**. Students are responsible for checking their UNMC email and the Learning Management System (Canvas) on a regular basis defined as at least once per weekday during the academic year (fall and spring semesters). A student who regularly does not respond within two business days to email requests will be reported to the Program Director who will meet with the student. Additional actions may be taken and can include a written warning in the Student File.

Summer communication expectations are defined by the Fieldwork Placement (GENC 750) course director and/or summer fieldwork supervisor.

Faculty are expected to respond to emails during typical business hours (9am to 4:30pm CST). Students should consider this when emailing after hours. If a student has not heard back after two business days, the student may email the faculty member again. If the matter is considered urgent by the student, and a response is not received (whether there is no response or the person is out of the office), then the student should contact the Program Director by email or cell phone.

Counseling Services

<https://www.unmc.edu/student-success/support-services/counseling/students.html>

Genetic counseling students, as full-time students, have access to a variety of resources through the Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at UNMC. CAPS provides individual counseling, group counseling, bio-feedback and relaxation training, peer support, crisis support, and more. Beginning Fall 2023, first year genetic counseling students will participate in the “Quick Checks” program available through CAPS. This program provides an introductory visit to all students to decrease barriers and support access for potential future visits.

Dress Code

General: According to the CAHP Professional Conduct policy, “Students are required to maintain a neat, professional appearance in all educational activities.” The remainder of this section is specific to the Genetic Counseling Program.

Each student must always wear their identification badge. Masks, protective eyewear, and/or other items may be required for classes and/or placements. Generally, closely trimmed beards, sideburns, and mustaches are allowed.

Hurtful wording and offensive graphics on clothing are not allowed. Students, faculty, and staff who have questions or concerns for student dress code will meet with the Program Director who will try to answer the questions and/or address the concerns. Depending on the concern, additional actions may be taken and can include a written warning in the Student File or disciplinary procedures in accordance with the UNMC Student Code of Conduct.

Classes: When taking classes, students may wear casual attire. This includes t-shirts, sweaters, jeans, and non-athletic shorts. Shoes can include flip flops, sandals, and tennis shoes. Any questions about dress code in the classrooms should be routed to the Program Director.

Fieldwork Placements: (clinics, hospitals, businesses): When at a fieldwork placement site (including MMI), students must comply with the dress code and safety requirements of the specific facility—*this includes any time on site for chart review, meetings, etc.* Business casual attire is generally recommended for placements. Unacceptable forms of dress in patient care areas can include jeans, athletic wear, shorts, t-shirts, low necklines, bare backs, and open-toe shoes (sandals, flip flops, etc). Please refer to your placement supervisor for specific dress code requirements.

Students who fail to comply with the dress code requirements (as stated here or required by specific fieldwork placement site) may be dismissed from the program activities, and this could result in failure to meet the requirements of the experience.

Feedback

Student

Seeking and responding appropriately to feedback is a practice-based competency in genetic counseling. Genetic counseling students will receive feedback throughout their time in the program. As part of the Professional Growth and Learning aspect of the Professionalism Rubric, students are expected to “seek feedback and respond well to performance critique, self-reflect on performance, recognize limitations, and ask for help when needed.”

Students are also asked to provide feedback on instructors, courses, placements, supervisors, and the program. Students must not make moral or value judgments or focus on a person’s character. Instead, students should be specific, kind, and focus on observable behavior.

Instructor and Course Evaluations (midsemester and final)

At the end of each semester, instructor and course evaluations are completed by students. This information contributes to faculty reflections and accreditation reports.

In addition to the formal instructor and course evaluations at the end of the semester, the program employs midsemester surveys to students that may assess what topics are unclear and/or what is going well in the course. This is an opportunity for students to share comments and questions regarding the class (grading, length of class, etc).

Outside of these surveys, any comments for a specific class should first go to the course director(s) and then the Program Director.

Fieldwork Feedback

Specific requirements for evaluations on supervisors and sites can be found in the fieldwork course syllabi.

Stakeholder Feedback

Students who have comments, concerns, feedback, or suggestions can connect with either the Program Director or Dr. Sarah McBrien (sarah.mcbrien@unmc.edu; someone outside the program) to talk through these and/or determine potential next steps. These conversations would remain confidential.

If a student does not feel comfortable reporting or discussing with someone directly, then there is an anonymous, electronic survey. The Program Director receives an email once this survey is completed. Because the survey is anonymous, we ask students to share either their name or graduation year if they want a direct update on what is submitted.

Other

Other feedback mechanisms include 360 Leadership Evaluations and second-year exit interviews.

Food & Drink

When on UNMC's main campus, students are allowed to bring drinks (container with a lid), snacks, and lunchboxes into the classroom. A refrigerator and microwave are available in Bennett Hall on the 6th floor, and there are microwaves in the Michael Sorrel Center Commons area. Eating in the classroom is allowed as long as students are cleaning up the area when used.

MMI has a large breakroom on the 4th floor where students (and employees) can eat. This space has refrigerators and microwaves. Students should mark any item(s) in the fridge with their name and the date.

Most clinical areas do not allow food or drink (including water). Please discuss this with your supervisor.

Genetic Counseling Services

A student who desires genetic counseling services should schedule a formal appointment at the appropriate clinic. Genetic counseling faculty are not allowed to provide genetic counseling services during class time or outside of a formal clinical environment. Additionally, any genetic counseling student scheduled to see a genetic counselor should not be seen by another student.

Student Health & Insurance

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/campus-services/student-health/>

Genetic counseling students, as full-time students, have access to Student Health Services as delineated in the UNMC Student Handbook.

Student Health Insurance

Genetic counseling students are classified as full-time students and must have health insurance including inpatient (hospitalization) insurance. Full-time students who wish to waive/decline UNMC's endorsed student health insurance program may do so by providing proof of coverage through their parents, spouse, employer or their own personal plan.

Student Records

Student Records: Each student's online file shall contain the following while in the program (maintained by CAHP Enrollment Management and Student Affairs):

1. UNMC application form
2. Copy of official college transcripts
3. Record of transcript evaluation

Permanent Student Records: Academic transcript (maintained by the UNMC Registrar or home institution registrar) on record with legal name, grades/credits, dates of admission and completion.

Remediation plans (areas of deficiency, finalized plan, and outcome) will be stored in the secure, online shared drive for the program. Only program leadership and the Education Program Coordinator will have access to these files. A copy of the remediation plan is provided to the student and maintained in the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Office.

Documentation related to any *student withdrawal or dismissal* is maintained in the online, secure shared drive for the program. Only program leadership and the Education Program Coordinator have access to these electronic files. The Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Office also maintains a copy of any documentation related to student withdrawal or dismissal. Additionally, any changes to the student's status are held with the UNMC Academic Records office (Registrar).

Documentation of any counseling reports/sessions is maintained for a minimum of two years. Each student shall have access to their records.

Travel

https://www.unmc.edu/cahphandbook/index.php/Non-Academic_Policies_and_Procedures#Student_Travel
Student Services

The term "travel" is defined as an absence from the campus during normal work or instructional schedules for the purpose of conducting University business. **All travel must be authorized in advance.** Student travel will be approved by the program in which the student is enrolled. The program is responsible for making appropriate arrangements for travel authorization and reimbursement, where applicable.

1. A request for Travel Authorization (TA) is required for all travel involving University business functions, **even when no University expense is involved.** *If the student is also a UNMC employee, OR for travel not required by the educational program, such as optional travel to a professional conference, a separate TA is required for each trip involving air transportation and for all out-of-state travel, including travel by state vehicle.*
2. A TA is required for all student travel; a student travel group may be included on a single TA or in instances where no individual travel expenses will be filed.
3. Prospective travelers are asked to consider the required amount of time needed to secure the necessary approval and to allow 30 days from initiation of the request to final approval.

University Computers & Printers

Main Campus (Sorrell & WH level 7/Library are the closest locations)

Students may print directly from UNMC supplied workstations or wirelessly print.

Students are provided with a semester printing quota. Additional pages can be added to the quota. More information, including locations of the printers, can be found on this page:

<https://info.unmc.edu/it/portfolios/teaching/student%20computers%20and%20printing.html>

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)

Students can print from one of ten desktop computers in the Munroe Meyer Institute (MMI) Student Computer Lab on the 2nd floor (Room #20206). Students print to the Secureprint queue and then collect their printouts by badging at the printer just around the corner from the Student Computer Lab. Students should email mmiits@unmc.edu with any questions.

UNMC & CAHP Policies & Procedures

Genetic Counseling students are also responsible for reviewing the CAHP and UNMC Student Handbooks.

CAHP Student Policies

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/allied-health-professions/cahppolicies/>

UNMC Student Handbook

<https://catalog.unmc.edu/general-information/student-policies-procedures/>