Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program

2024-2025
Program Student Handbook

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Section I: Program Information

Program Mission

> The Master of Science in Genetic Counseling program's mission is to
>
> cultivate exceptional genetic counseling leaders
>
> who reflect the visible and invisible diversity of the communities we serve.

The mission will be achieved through the following aims:

- Create *compassionate*, academically minded genetic counselors with a curiosity for *life-long learning*.
- Demonstrate *responsibility to the communities we serve* by prioritizing *health equity*, *advocacy*, and *cultural humility*.
- Foster authenticity, integrity, and resilience through a *culture of belonging*.
- Nurture skills to inspire our students to become *future leaders* in the profession.

Purpose of this Handbook

The Master of Science in Genetic Counseling (MSGC) Student Handbook provides information for current and prospective students regarding the program's mission, degree requirements, and expectations for students. This handbook is considered a supplement to the Graduate School Handbook as well as the All Student Handbook. **It is the responsibility of all students enrolled in the MSGC Program to be aware of and comply with all requirements, policies, procedures, and deadlines in all three Handbooks.** The MSGC Program Student Handbook is updated annually and available on the program website. The Genetic Counseling program reserves the right to update this Handbook during the academic year as needs arise.

Program overview

The MSGC program offers a Master of Science degree in Genetic Counseling through the Graduate School at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). The program is a full-time, day program with one annual cohort of students beginning each fall semester. It is recommended that students become familiar with the academic calendar of the Graduate School which can be found on the Office of the Registrar website. The duration is 21 months in length, consisting of four fall/spring terms with one intervening summer term session. The program curriculum consists of 56 term credits, including coursework, practicum/fieldwork experiences, and a research thesis. Students who successfully complete the program will be eligible for the American Board of Genetic Counseling certification examination.

Administration

The Medical College of Wisconsin is a health sciences university comprised of the Medical School, the Pharmacy School, and the Graduate School. The MSGC program is offered by the Graduate School and housed within the Institute for Health Equity. The program partners with several Institutes, Centers, and Clinical and Basic Science Departments across MCW in addition to affiliate organizations. The MCW main campus in Milwaukee is part of an academic medical center located on the Milwaukee Regional

Medical Center which is shared with Froedtert Hospital, Children's Wisconsin, Curative Care Network, and Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin. The MSGC program also utilizes the MCW regional campus in Green Bay which is located at St. Norbert College which is approximately 125 miles northwest of the Milwaukee campus.

The administrative program faculty and staff consist of the following individuals:

Jenny Geurts, MS, CGC	Program Director
Theresa Shuck, MS, MA, CGC, LPC	Associate Director
Erin Syverson, MGC, CGC	Assistant Director
Donald Basel, MD	Medical Director
Alison La Pean Kirschner, MS, CGC	Director of Research
Morgan Armstrong, MS, CGC	Director of Fieldwork Training
Mackenzie Drozdowicz, MS	Education Program Coordinator

Governance

The program receives governance and oversight from the following committees:

Advisory Board

- Provides guidance to the program on alignment to the program's mission along with the mission and values of the Institute for Health & Equity and the Medical College of Wisconsin.
- Reviews summarized program evaluation results and makes recommendations for program improvement
- Provides input into program policies specific to admissions, curriculum, student assessment and faculty and program evaluation
- Advises changes and enhancements to support compliance with accreditation standards
- Reviews and provides guidance on educational goals and objectives, curriculum planning and program outcomes
- Provides guidance on adequate learning and administrative resources necessary to achieve program goals
- Provides guidance and consultation to program leaders to support program success

Admissions Committee

- Promotes the mission and vision of MCW and the MSGC Program through the entire admissions process
- Offers advise/guidance on how diversity – personal experience, academic interest, non-academic achievements should be considered in evaluation of applicants for their potential to contribute and benefit from the graduate experience at MCW. Adhering to MCW's Student Diversity Policy
- Advises and provides recommendations on recruitment initiatives to develop an applicant pool and yield efforts to produce an entering class that reflects the established academic and non-academic criteria for admissions.
- Determines the most effective methodology for evaluation of applications and ranking of candidates for the match. Reviews applications, interviews, and ranks applicants for Program matriculation.
- Responsible for evaluating, approving and assuring compliance with admissions policies and practices including periodic review and adopting necessary revisions.
- Reports status and activities to the Advisory Board and Program Leadership Committee on a routine basis

Program Leadership Committee

- Formulates educational goals consistent with program requirements
- Implements procedures to evaluate program educational goals
- Uses feedback from Advisory Board and evaluation results to develop and implement policy changes and program improvement
- Ensures accreditation compliance
- Reviews educational goals and objectives, course content and sequencing, and instructional methods
- Plans for adequate learning resources necessary to achieve instructional goals
- Establishes and reviews student clinical performance criteria
- Reports proceedings to the Advisory Board on a routine basis

Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee

- Operates under the guidance and direction of Graduate School policies on academic progress, professional misconduct and remediation
- Follows Committee and Graduate School procedures
- Provides input to the Graduate School for all decisions regarding 1) disciplinary sanctions of individual students for academic or professionalism reasons and 2) the determination of whether a student has satisfied the requirements for the MSGC degree program
- Reports the proceedings to the Advisory Board and Program Leadership Committee on a routine basis

Graduate Studies Council

- Membership to the Graduate Studies Council (GSC) shall consist of the program directors and recruitment directors from each of the doctoral Graduate School programs, the program director of each master's degree Graduate School program, the President and Vice-President of the Graduate Student Association, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Associate Dean, Office of Postdoctoral Education, chairs of all Standing Committees, and other members as appointed by the Dean. Several standing committees of the GSC are involved in programmatic evaluation.

Accreditation

The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) has granted Accredited New Program accreditation status to the MCW MSGC program effective October 20, 2020. To maintain accreditation, the MSGC program must submit an annual Report of Current Status and pay required fees. Program accreditation is reviewed and renewed annually following submission of a complete Report of Current Status, providing there are no points that, in the Board's judgement, seriously compromise the education of MSGC students. Accredited New Program status remains in effect for 4 years at which time a determination must be made regarding the program's application for Accredited program status. A program achieving Accredited New Program status may admit students, who, upon successfully completing their degree, will be deemed to have graduated from an ACGC-accredited program.

Diversity

As part of the MSGC Program's mission "to reflect the visible and invisible diversity of the communities we serve," our program leadership strives to provide our students, staff, faculty, educators and other stakeholders with an understanding of various types of diversity while celebrating our differences. Additionally, we seek to raise awareness of related MCW inclusion efforts and resources as well those from the broader genetic counseling profession.

In our mission, visible diversity describes observable differences between individuals, while invisible diversity is not directly observed. Examples of visible diversity may include race, ethnicity, gender, and age, while examples of invisible diversity may include sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, country of origin, culture, language, religion, spiritual beliefs, immigration status, health history, and disability/differing ability. Of note, some "visible" diversity may be invisible, and some "invisible" diversity may be observable, depending on context and perspectives.

Within MCW, the Student Diversity Policy provides MCW department chairs and administrative leaders with the rationale, definitions, and institutional practices intended to address the need for increased diversity and inclusion of the next generation of students into MCW educational and training programs. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is an excellent resource for all faculty, staff and students, while the Office of Student Inclusion and Academic Enrichment exists to recruit students who are Under-Represented in Medicine and supports diversity of all types in medical education.

The rational for the MCW Student Diversity policy speaks to the importance of diversity efforts across our campus: "An educational environment with people from diverse backgrounds provides an enriched environment for learning in which students gain critical preparation for professions that increasingly require the ability to manage ambiguity and complexity, work effectively in diverse teams, and engage in life-long learning. Increasing the demographic diversity of our student population is vital to redressing historical injustices, improving healthcare equity, addressing health disparities, and ensuring quality and equity in scientific research."

The National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) has issued a statement on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion that speaks to historical inequities, the need for a diverse genetic counseling workforce, commitment to an inclusive future and they have published an Action Plan. The MCW MSGC Program expects that our students, faculty, staff, educators, and other stakeholders will recognize the value of these statements, participate in these efforts, and abide by the NSGC Policy on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging. We also encourage individuals involved with the program to join genetic counseling-related affinity and advocacy groups such as the Minority Genetics Professional Network and Genetic Counseling Trainees for Racial Justice (more info on these and other groups can be found under "Genetic Counseling Affinity & Advocacy Groups" in the Student Resources section of this handbook).

Enrollment

The MSGC Program participates in the Genetic Counseling Admissions Match through National Matching Services (NMS). The MSGC program offers 2 match tracks, the Milwaukee campus and the Green Bay campus. The Match results constitute a binding commitment from which neither the applicant nor the program can withdraw without mutual written consent. Therefore, the program does not allow deferred admission; an applicant must enroll during the year they are accepted. Please visit the NMS website to review detailed information about the matching process and policies. Students will be administratively registered for core courses by the Graduate School. A confirmation email and confirmation on courses registered for will be sent to student's MCW email during the registration period.

Orientation

The program will hold a mandatory annual orientation prior to the first week of the academic year for all students. Orientation will include a combination of in-person sessions and on-line modules. Orientation provides verbal and written information on the following topics:

- Welcome and overview of the program
- Institutional and program commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Introduction to program faculty, staff and students
- General information about the MCW campus, schools, departments and resources
- Review of All Student Handbook, Graduate School Handbook and MSGC Program Handbook
- Detailed review of curriculum including coursework, practicums and research thesis.
- Campus maps, way-finding, and obtaining identification badges
- Trainings on institutional systems and applications
- Review of all onboarding forms and immunization requirements
- Preparing for graduate studies: Academic Support & Enrichment and Student Health & Wellness
- Professionalism, leadership, and mentorship
- Professional organizations, relevant events, & communication platforms

Section II: Academics

Curriculum Overview

The foundation of the curriculum is rooted in ACGC Practice Based Competencies (PBCs)for genetic counselors. The curriculum was designed so that students will progress from building genetic counseling knowledge, to initial learning of applications of that knowledge, to implementation of the knowledge, and finally refining the practice and preparing to transition to the workforce. This will be accomplished through a combination of didactic classwork with practice-based learning (in and out of the classroom) in the first year, growing into active involvement in clinical practicums and fieldwork experiences in the second year. Additionally, research thesis development and supplementary activities will be incorporated spanning the entire curriculum.

MSGC Curriculum Overview

1st Year	
Fall Term	
Molecules to Cells for GCs	3
GC1: Skills & Practice	2
Research Methodologies	2
GC Seminar	1
Laboratory Practicum	3
Total Term Credits	11
Spring Term	
Human Development & Prenatal Genetics	2
GC2: Theory & Practice	2
Translational Genomics	3
Cancer Genomics	2
GC Seminar	1
Research Thesis	1
Total Term Credits	11
Summer Term	
Medical Genomics (11 weeks online)	3
Clinical Practicum I (9 weeks)	3
Research Thesis	2
Total Term Credits	8

2nd Year	
Fall Term	
Bioethics in Precision Medicine (online)	3
GC3: Psychosocial Issues	2
GC Seminar	1
Clinical Practicum II (8 weeks)	3
Clinical Practicum III (8 weeks)	3
Research Thesis	2
Total Term Credits	14
Spring Term	
GC4: Advanced Topics	2
GC Seminar	1
Clinical Practicum IV (8 weeks)	3
Clinical Practicum V (7 weeks)	3
Research Thesis	3
Total Term Credits	12

Practicums & Fieldwork Experiences

Students are required to complete five practicums within the program. There are 4 core clinical specialty placements and 1 elective rotation. The core clinical placements are in pediatrics, prenatal, cancer, and other adult specialty (i.e. cancer neurology, ophthalmology, reproductive medicine). The one elective rotation is for students to identify an opportunity that aligns with their professional interests (specialties, patient populations, geographies, etc) which may include application to an emerging specialty realm, industry, laboratory, education, and/or other virtual/telehealth experiences not within the MCW health system or their partners. Alternatively, the elective rotation may include an additional core clinical specialty placement.

Each rotation will be 7-9 weeks (depending on which term) in length consisting of sixteen 8-hour days, schedule to be determined based on coursework schedule, supervisor availability and fieldwork site schedule. Based on course load, students are expected to have a total of at least 2 full practicum days per week. It may be possible for students to spend more than 2 full days per week in their practicum rotation if needed to help improve skills and competencies and complete the appropriate number of core cases for their ABGC board eligibility.

Many practicum and fieldwork sites are offered on campus; however, several sites are located throughout Southeastern and Eastern Wisconsin. Students admitted to the Green Bay campus track will complete their 1st practicum in pediatrics at Children's Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Starting in the fall of their 2nd year, Green Bay campus track students will relocate to Green Bay to complete the remainder of their practicums in the Green Bay and Appleton areas. The partnering Hospital systems for the Green Bay track include HSHS St. Vincent Hospital-Green Bay, Aurora BayCare Medical Center-Green Bay, Theda Care Regional Medical Center-Appleton, and Hemophilia Outreach Center-Green Bay & Wausau.

Students will need to utilize a car for transportation to and from practicums due to the lack of efficient public transportation options to the clinic sites. The rotation placements will be facilitated by the Director of Fieldwork Training and will be based on curriculum schedule along with fieldwork site and supervisor schedule. Other factors that may influence student placement include the student's residency location at the time of enrollment, student's preference of location, exposure to desired specialty, student's professional interests, student's family, work and non-academic commitments, and socioeconomic concerns.

Second Year Practicum & Fieldwork Experience Schedule Example

	Summer* Practicum I	Fall Practicum II	Fall Practicum III	Spring Practicum IV	Spring Practicum V
1	Elective	Pediatrics	Prenatal	Oncology	Adult Specialty
2	Oncology	Pediatrics	Adult Specialty	Prenatal	Elective
3	Adult Specialty	Oncology	Pediatrics	Elective	Prenatal
4	Elective	Prenatal	Pediatrics	Oncology	Adult Specialty
5	Elective	Adult Specialty	Oncology	Pediatrics	Prenata
6	Elective	Adult Specialty	Prenatal	Pediatrics	Oncology
7	Pediatrics	Oncology	Adult Specialty	Prenatal	Elective
8	Oncology	Prenatal	Adult Specialty	Elective	Pediatrics
9	Pediatrics	Elective	Oncology	Prenatal	Adult Specialty
10	Prenatal	Adult Specialty	Elective	Oncology	Pediatrics
11 *GB track	Pediatrics-MCW	Multi-ThedaCare	Elective	Multi-HSH Green Bay	NICHE-HSHS Green Bay
12 *GB track	Pediatrics-MCW	Multi-HSH Green Bay	Multi-HSH Green Bay	Multi-ThedaCare	Elective

** Students are encouraged to complete their summer practicums as their elective rotation when possible, as more opportunities exist during the summer term for travel, industry rotations, and other emerging specialty realms. Some sites may require approval from the Program Director and Director of Fieldwork Training (requires affiliation agreement). In addition, international students who desire to participate in an away rotation in the summer term need to contact the Graduate School International Student Advisor at gradschool@mcw.edu to ensure compliance with Federal Regulation.*

Training Sites & Specialties - Milwaukee Track

- MCW-Froedtert Health: Oncology, Prenatal, Adult Specialty
- MCW-Children's Wisconsin: Pediatrics
- Advocate-Aurora Healthcare in WI: Oncology, Prenatal, Adult Specialty

- Ascension Wisconsin: Oncology
- ThedaCare Appleton, WI: Multi-Specialty
- Versiti Blood Center: Hematology, lab
- Hospital Sisters Health System: Pediatrics, Oncology, Prenatal, Adult Specialty
- ProHealth Care: Prenatal and Gynecological cancers

Training Sites & Specialties – Green Bay Track

- MCW-Children's Wisconsin: Pediatrics
- HSHS St. Vincent Hospital-Green Bay
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center-Green Bay,
- Hemophilia Outreach Center-Green Bay & Wausau
- Theda Care Regional Medical Center-Appleton
- Elective Rotation Opportunities

Elective Rotations Opportunities

- Education and Program Development
- Public Health
- Ethics
- Community Engagement & Advocacy

Research Thesis

The culminating experience for students in the MSGC Program is a formal written thesis research project and presentation on a topic related to genetic counseling. Working on the research thesis allows students to develop skills that enhance intellectual development and critical, flexible thinking. Our research program is driven by the interests of the individual student and takes advantage of the wide variety of genomics-related initiatives across our MCW community, the State of Wisconsin, nationally, and even internationally.

The timeline for the thesis project begins in the Fall of the first year in the Research Methodologies Course when students identify a research question they are interested in studying, complete a comprehensive literature review on the subject, and begin to identify possible thesis advisor(s). Continuation of the research process happens within the research thesis credits throughout the remainder of the program. Students will secure a Thesis Committee comprised of their primary thesis advisor (Committee Chair) and at least two additional committee members. The Committee will approve the project in advance, will provide guidance and supervision of the project, and will critique and approve the final thesis. In addition to Thesis Committee approval, project approval also needs to be obtained by the MSGC Program Research Director, MSGC Program Director, MCW Graduate School, and Institutional Review Board(s) as appropriate. No data collection may begin prior to these approvals.

Each student will schedule a “Closed Assessment” Thesis Committee Review, in which the student will present their completed written work to their full thesis committee along with an oral presentation of their materials for formal assessment. The Thesis Committee will perform a final review of the research and question the student on their topic of study. The Thesis Committee will privately discuss and decide whether the student meets criteria for the Master of Science thesis requirement based on the program-approved evaluation rubric. Students will also present their work at the year-end Genetic Counseling Program Graduation Colloquium (open to students, faculty, staff, family/public).

The final product of the research thesis is a publication-ready manuscript, acceptable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The specific details of the style of the manuscript (i.e., length, format, reference style) will be determined by the requirements of the selected journal. The manuscript should be written as if the target readership includes genetic counselors and genetic counseling students. Submission of research results appropriate for publication to a peer-reviewed journal is expected. In addition, abstract submission to a national and/or regional academic meeting is required for each student.

Assessment of Student Performance

The comprehensive approach to assessment is designed to evaluate if the student is progressively meeting the aims of the program. Evaluations are based on practice-based competencies and measure the student's ability to meet the defined learning objectives. Summative and formative evaluations are provided throughout the course instruction, fieldwork training, and research thesis. Formal evaluations are documented in writing, maintained in the student record, reviewed by program leadership, and discussed with the student.

Students will be required to meet once per fall and spring term with the Program Director and additional program leadership as needed. These regular meetings will provide an opportunity for students to discuss their overall progress, individual educational needs, and goals. The discussion will be documented using the Student Progress Communication Form with a general summary of the topics discussed, and a copy will be kept in the student record. Students are expected to fill out the Student Progress Communication Form following their meeting with the program leadership and send it to the leadership member for signature and uploading.

Grading

The MSGC Program follows the grading policy from the Graduate School Handbook.

Grading scale for classroom coursework:

A . . . 4.0 A- . . . 3.7	B+ . . . 3.3 B . . .3.0 B- . . . 2.7	C+ . . . 2.3 C . . .2.0 C- . . . 1.7
		F . . . 0

Grading scale for Research Thesis, Clinical Practicum(s) and Genetic Counseling Seminar: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U).

Please see the All Student Handbook for information on student withdrawals, incomplete grades, and grade appeals. Since the Genetic Counseling courses are offered in sequence, a student who temporarily withdraws from the program must keep in mind that opportunity for re-entry is oftentimes one year later. Additional policies regarding auditing, incomplete courses, withdrawals and grade appeals can be found in the Graduate School Handbook.

Students will be assessed based on:

- **Coursework –** Course directors will be responsible for monitoring students' academic performance and reporting any concerns to program leadership. Students will be graded on an A-F scale based on their exams, coursework, participation, and other criteria outlined in the course syllabi. Formative assessment (such as exams and final projects) will be evaluated using a grading rubric. Individual assessment grades will be completed within 2 weeks of assessment due date. Assessment grades will be assigned and displayed in Brightspace and final grades will be displayed in MCW Connect.

Students are encouraged to discuss any individual concerns regarding their coursework and assessments with each course director as appropriate. Additionally, students will discuss their broader academic performance and any concerns they may have during their semesterly meeting with the Program Director and/or Director of Curriculum. Per graduate school policies, all students are expected to maintain a "B" (3.0) cumulative average in coursework. The GC Seminar is a course that is graded on the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) scale based on measures of participation, activity completion, presentations, community engagement and interdisciplinary competency.

- **Practicum & Fieldwork Experiences –** Students will work with their supervisors to set reasonable goals for each of their rotations. Students will be evaluated on their practicum performance by keeping a case log demonstrating that they are making progress towards meeting the required number of "participatory" cases (minimum of 50 before graduation) and that they are working towards gaining experience in the practice-based competencies. Students will complete a written self-evaluation after each rotation, and each supervisor provides a written evaluation of the student at the mid-point and final week of the rotation. Supervisors discuss each evaluation with the student directly. Students meet with the Director of Fieldwork at the end of the rotation to discuss the evaluation, their experiences and feedback. Students can request a meeting with the Director of Fieldwork Training at anytime if there are more urgent concerns that need to be addressed or if they desire a mid-point meeting to review their progress. Evaluations are maintained by the program as part of the student record. Students are graded on the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) scale based on measure of professionalism, assessment of clinical knowledge and skill in the practice-based competencies, timely and complete submission of all practicum/fieldwork site evaluations and maintenance of the electronic portfolio logging all casework.
- **Thesis Research -** Students must complete a Masters-level thesis, as outlined above in the "research requirement." Throughout the process, the student will be responsible for having regular meetings with their thesis committee and updating the committee with their progress. If a student is at risk of not completing their thesis or is struggling in this requirement, the program leadership must be made aware to discuss the appropriate course of action. Students are required to submit a Thesis Progress Report reviewed and signed by their primary thesis advisor for each term (Spring Y1, Summer Y1, Fall Y2) and a final Thesis Closed Door Assessment (Spring Y2) signed by all thesis committee members. Students are graded on the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) scale based on assessment from the primary thesis advisor and thesis committee, and term goals set by the program. Progress reports are due one week before the end of each term, which gives the students ~2 weeks to complete any tasks or remediation before final grades need to be entered. Each progress report requires an overall progress assessment ("On Track," "Small Delays," and "Significant Delays"), comment section for each term goal (2-3 each term), a standardized feedback rubric & comment section from the primary thesis advisor, and an overall performance evaluation ("Satisfactory," Satisfactory Pending," or Unsatisfactory) with a text box to specify any remediation necessary. The final thesis Closed Door Assessment has a standardized rubric for both the written (manuscript) component of the thesis work and for the oral presentation. The committee members choose a final thesis rating ("Satisfactory, "Satisfactory Pending," or "Unsatisfactory"). Ratings of "Satisfactory Pending" or "Unsatisfactory" require additional work/remediation (specified in the comments section by the committee), and a second full thesis committee review is needed (addressing the requested edits in the written component, oral presentation component, or both) before the student is able to complete their thesis requirement and graduate.

Academic requirements

Per the Graduate School Student Handbook, students are expected to maintain a "B" (3.0) cumulative grade point average in courses and "S" or better performance in other components of the academic

program. Students must receive a passing grade for all courses by the time of graduation; a passing grade is defined as a B- or better. Students must have a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) to be in good academic standing and to be eligible to graduate. Students must successfully complete all required program courses, practicums and thesis requirements. Course completion requirements are defined in the course syllabus. A student who does not receive a B- in a course will be asked to repeat the course, even if the student has an overall satisfactory GPA of 3.0. In addition, if a student receives below a B- in a class that is prerequisite to an upcoming class, the student may not be able to continue with the subsequent coursework. A student who does not maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better will be notified by the Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee that they are on academic probation. A student can be on probation for up to two semesters, during which time they must achieve grades sufficient to return their overall GPA to 3.0 or better. Under extenuating circumstances, the period of probationary status may be extended. Failure to rise above probationary status will result in the student not being permitted to continue in the program. Except under extenuating circumstances, probationary status may only occur once during a student's academic career in the Graduate School. Under no circumstances will a degree be issued to anyone who does not meet a 3.0 cumulative grade point average.

Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee

Student progress will be monitored by regular meetings of the Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee. Course directors, practicum supervisors and thesis advisors who are not members of the committee should discuss concerns regarding student performance or professionalism with appropriate, relevant program leadership (i.e. professionalism issues in practicums will be discussed with the Director of Fieldwork Training). Recurring or serious issues will then be referred to the Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee for review and remediation planning. Remediation planning will be individualized based on the particular circumstance and the needs of the student. All remediation involves detailed documentation of deficiencies identified, the agreed upon remediation plan, and the outcome of the remediation. Additional information regarding academic standing, the appeal process, disciplinary procedures and sanctions can be found in the Graduate School Handbook.

The Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee refers cases of professional or academic misconduct to the Graduate school for investigation and corresponding disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Graduate School Handbook. Reports of professional misconduct should be reported to the Graduate Program Director and/or the Graduate School Dean. The consequences of professional misconduct range depending on the type and severity of the misconduct but may include reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, dismissal from the graduate program and/or revocation of any awarded degrees/certificates.

Attendance

Students are required to attend all components of the curriculum including: course lectures, discussions, case conferences/seminars, professional conferences, clinical observations and practicums/fieldwork experiences, the Research Colloquium, and other supplemental activities. Virtual attendance via recorded livestream is not considered appropriate professional behavior unless specifically permitted by the course director and/or supervisor. Students should not schedule personal appointments during these times. If sick, students should inform their instructor, advisor, or supervisor as soon as possible if they will not be attending an activity or a meeting. If a student has an ongoing medical issue that will require them to miss multiple days of class and/or require them to attend class virtually, documentation from a medical provider for the accommodation will be required for the absence or virtual attendance to be considered excused.

Program leadership is aware there may be scheduling conflicts between clinical practicum cases of particular interest/value and a regularly scheduled class, or there may be other personal extenuating circumstances, such as a religious observance, that would cause a student to miss class. If this is the case, the student must notify the Program Director and Course Director in writing as soon as possible, and receive both of their approvals for the excused absence. Students are responsible for all materials and coursework during any class absence. Make-up assignments, quizzes, or graded activities are not offered for unexcused absences.

Regardless of whether or not an absence was excused or unexcused, it is expected that the student will review the content that was missed and achieve the learning objectives for each session by:

- Watching the recording of the missed class period or meeting. In the learning management system, the course director can monitor if the recordings were viewed to completion.
- Writing a one page (single spaced) essay that includes at least 3 main takeaways or new things that were learned and how these integrate into the student's previous understanding of the topic.
- Submitting the essay and notify the course director of completion of recording within 5 days of the missed period. If a student has an extended leave of absence, this should be discussed with the director ahead of time so that an alternate plan may be created.

A student's grade will be marked as "incomplete" until makeup assignments are completed. If a grade remains incomplete at the grading deadline, the grade automatically resorts to a fail. While this is the baseline expectation for make-up work, the course director may customize and/or have additional requirements depending on the specific student circumstance.

Participation points are part of the grading scheme for some classes. If a student must miss multiple class periods (for excused purposes) to the degree that their participation points are being affected, they should work with the course director to determine how to make up participation points.

With the exception of unforeseen illness or emergency, failure to attend scheduled course activities, or failure to notify their course director/supervisor within a timely manner, will be considered unprofessional conduct. Students who miss more than 3 individual classes within a single semester will be referred to the Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee. If a student is absent from classes or practicum for more than two consecutive weeks of an academic session, it may be recommended that the student consider a leave of absence in an effort to prevent long-term negative effects on the student's academic performance and academic record.

Program Completion

By the end of their curriculum, students must be able to demonstrate all the ACGC Practice Based Competencies. Students will demonstrate these competencies through satisfactory completion of their coursework, practicums, and research thesis. Students will also need to pass a comprehensive exam at the end of their final semester (as part of their GC4: Advanced Topics course), which encompasses material from all aspects of the program. If a student does not pass this comprehensive exam, remediation will be available; if students demonstrate sufficient remediation, they will be considered to have passed.

If a student cannot successfully demonstrate these competencies, the student's course of study may be extended or otherwise altered to ensure successful performance as a genetic counselor. Changes to the course of study are at the discretion of Program Director and the Academic Progress & Professionalism

Committee and may include course repeat, remediation of course requirements, and additional clinical rotation requirements. The Academic Progress & Professionalism Committee will determine if a student has satisfied the requirements for the MSGC degree program. Three months prior to graduation this committee will review all student records and preparedness for graduation and communicate outcomes to the student in writing. Readiness for graduation is also discussed in detail during the term meetings with the Program Director and additional program leadership. Within 2 weeks prior to graduation the student will meet with the Program Director or Assistant Program Director to complete the Graduation Readiness Assessment Form.

If students successfully complete all program curriculum requirements, including obtaining the required number of "participatory" cases for their log book, they will be conferred with the Master of Science in Genetic Counseling, and will be eligible to sit for the American Board of Genetic Counseling exam.

All graduating students must apply for graduation by the published deadline. Please see the Graduate School Handbook for more information.

Section III: Policies

Evaluation of Program

Students are required to complete the following evaluations throughout the program:

- **Course evaluations:** Per the Graduate School policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate School Handbook, student evaluations are completed anonymously using the Graduate School's online platform, OASIS. All students enrolled in the course for credit are required to complete the course evaluation. OASIS keeps track of the students who have completed the evaluation, but feedback will remain anonymous to Graduate School and MSGC Leadership.

  The Graduate School automatically sends students instructions for completing their course evaluations at the beginning of the semester and informs them that the evaluations must be completed *within 33 days* after the end of the course. Evaluations will open two days prior to the last day of the course, then remain open for 35 days after that. Students will continue to receive weekly notification reminders to complete the evaluations from OASIS until the evaluation has been completed. At the end of the course evaluation period, the responses for all courses are compiled by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation and provided to the Graduate School. The Graduate School may issue a fine of $100 for each incomplete evaluation.

- **Instructor evaluations:** All students enrolled in a course for credit are also required to complete a standard evaluation form for each instructor in OASIS. Instructor evaluations will be released to the students after any given instructor's last lecture for the course and will remain open for 2 weeks. Students may have to evaluate an instructor more than once in a semester if that instructor teaches in more than one course.

- **Practicum/Fieldwork Experience Supervisor and Site evaluations:** Students are provided an end of rotation evaluation of supervisors and practicum site evaluation in OASIS. The supervisor and site evaluations will open on the last day of the practicum and must be completed within 2 weeks and prior to the students' final meetings with the Director of Fieldwork Training as part of the requirements for a passing grade. The feedback is provided back to the supervisors as an aggregated report once 3 or more have been collected to protect anonymity. The aggregate feedback will be shared with supervisors annually and reviewed by the Director of Fieldwork Training each term.

- **Thesis Research Advisor evaluations:** Students will be required to complete at least 1 Thesis Advisor evaluation regarding their Primary Thesis Advisor during each semester of thesis research (Spring Y1, Summer Y1, Fall Y2, and Spring Y2) in OASIS. The Thesis Advisor evaluation will open on the last day of the term and will remain open for 2 weeks. Students are encouraged to complete additional evaluations for their additional thesis committee members. Students are also provided with an 'Advisor Concern' evaluation option that gives them the option to give feedback about the advisor that will not be directly tied to that advisor. The Advisor Concern evaluation will instead be provided directly to the MSGC leadership to help address the student's concerns. The feedback provided will remain anonymous and is only provided back to the thesis advisor after 3 or more responses have been collected.

- **Leadership evaluations:** Upon Graduation, students participate in an anonymous End-of-Program survey to provide overarching feedback about the Program and Program Leadership. Aggregate and summarized data from this survey is reviewed by Program Leadership and the Advisory Board annually.

- **Program Feedback:** Students are always encouraged to share just-in-time feedback with program staff, faculty, and leadership. Immediate, specific, and constructive feedback directly with those involved often leads to the most productive ways to address issues through engaging dialogue and understanding.

  Students will partake in a peer-led discussion group once a month "Cohort Conversations", where they will have an opportunity to discuss their experience in the program. If problems or feedback are identified, a summary of the feedback should be shared with program here. Additionally, if students have personal or private feedback, they are encouraged to meet with program leadership to discuss their concerns or if they prefer, they can provide individual anonymous feedback to the program with this survey. Please also see Section IV on Student Concern Navigation.survey. Please also see Section IV on Student Concern Navigation.

Professionalism

All students are required to abide by the MCW Code of Conduct and the NSGC Code of Ethics.

All students are expected to exhibit professional behavior at all times, including but not limited to the following areas: classroom, simulation, clinical rotations, verbal and written communications, social media presence, successful completion of all program and curricular requirements, and maintaining a negative drug screen. Failure to do so may negatively impact student grades and lead to academic probation.

Attire

Student attire is a reflection of professional and personal identity. Students are expected to maintain a professional appearance at all times. The program trusts students' judgment in decerning what attire is suitable and allows for an authentic expression of themselves. Students may be counseled if their appearance interferes with safety or the learning environment. When in practicums, students are expected to comply with the guidelines for attire at each fieldwork site. These guidelines will be provided to each student prior to the start of their practicum rotation.

For security purposes, MCW issued ID badges must be worn and visible at all times while on MCW campus and in clinical practicum rotations. The ID badge also allows access to secured hospital and academic buildings as needed.

MCW Title IX Compliance

The Office of Civil Rights has released new regulations effective August 1, 2024. The scope of protections under Title IX include the following: Discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This is applicable for all sex discrimination occurring under MCW's education program or activity in the United States. MCW has an obligation to address a sex based hostile environment under its education program or activity, even when some conduct alleged to be contributing to the hostile environment occurred outside the recipient's education program or activity or outside the United States. Students may report a Title IX violation to the Title IX Coordinator

and to any faculty or staff member who is in an administrative leadership, teaching or advisory role in our education programs who are mandatory reporters. All other employees who are not confidential employees must also notify the Title IX Coordinator of any information about conduct that may reasonably constitute sex discrimination. See MCW's Title IX policy, resources and further information by viewing the Title IX webpage.

Other MCW Policies and Procedures

Current information on each of the following policies can be found by visiting the MCW Infoscope Human Resources website. Policies of particular importance include, but are not limited to:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Harassment and Non-Discrimination
- Drug Free Workplace
- Nepotism
- Smoke and Tobacco Free Campus
- Computer usage
- Authorship on Scientific and Scholarly Publications

Section IV: Student Resources

Student Well-Being

Well-being is the state of being comfortable, healthy and/or happy. In the pursuit of achieving your own personal well-being, there are a number of resources at MCW to help you meet your goals. The office of Academic and Student Services works closely across different sectors to connect you with the tools necessary for your personal and professional well-being. The following important information can also be found in the All Student Handbook

Mental Health and Wellness

The Medical College of Wisconsin recognizes our learners work hard and carry many responsibilities. Personal issues, planning for life events or simply managing daily life can affect your mental health, educational goals, and relationships. We are aware the demands of education training and service to patients can produce a variety of stressors for individuals and their families. We acknowledge that the transition to an intensive graduate program can be difficult. Through the MCW Student Assistance Program (SAP) ComPsych GuidanceResources, students and their family members have access to confidential support, resources, and information to provide guidance through life's challenges.

ComPsych offers guidance resources at no charge to students, including confidential counseling, school-life solutions, legal support, and financial information. Benefits include 10 unbilled counseling sessions through ComPsych and 10 unbilled sessions through the Student & Resident Behavioral Health clinic. For 24/7 assistance, contact GuidanceResources either online or call (833) 927-1860. The intake coordinator there will guide you to the right resource for you. Many safeguards are in place to ensure privacy and confidentiality regarding inquiries and treatment.

We encourage students to proactively seek out mental health resources. We value your dedication and hope you find these resources helpful.

Health Insurance

It is the policy of the Medical College of Wisconsin that all students must have insurance coverage. Students are free to choose their own health insurance, or they can choose to obtain health insurance through MCW. Please see the All Student Handbook for details on health insurance.

Student Concern Navigation

At MCW, we strive for excellence. Our success depends on our commitment to hold ourselves to the highest possible standards and provide the best and safest educational experience for our learners.

Students may have questions or concerns that need to be addressed to optimize their learning. The Student Concern Navigation Tool available on the MCW Intranet provides a quick and efficient way for students to locate the right office to provide the service they need. This resource helps to identify the appropriate contacts for concerns regarding:

- Health & Safety
- Unfair treatment, discrimination, sexual harassment and retaliation
- Enrollment and academic issues
- Anonymous and confidential reporting

Financial Aid

Students must maintain acceptable academic progress to be eligible for Title IV financial aid programs, as set forth by federal regulations. Students who fail to maintain acceptable academic progress will lose

financial aid eligibility. Please refer to the All Student Handbook for the current Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy.

The Financial Aid Office is available to assist students with services ranging from budgeting to securing financial aid.

Emergency Loan

The Medical College of Wisconsin will grant Emergency Loans to full-time registered students during the academic year for a maximum of 90 days. The maximum limit of $1,000 is available and may be granted to students twice during the academic year, once during each half of the year. The loans will be interest-free for the first 90 days, after which, interest will accrue at the rate of 12% per annum. All outstanding Emergency Loans due the Medical College of Wisconsin must be paid before graduation for the diploma to be presented. Pease refer to the All Student Handbook for the full policy.

Campus Resources

- MCW Information Services Help Desk
- MCW Libraries
- Student Health & Wellness
- Office of the Registrar
- Graduate School-Graduate Student Association
- Matthews MCW Bookstore
- Ruth & Reid Tonkens Exercise Center

Connection, Affinity, & Advocacy Groups

The list below is not all-inclusive; other groups both formal and informal may exist. Students who are interested in identifying additional groups should feel empowered to do so and may contact the Director of Student and Curriculum Inclusion for help and to share additional resources. Additionally, these groups are not formally endorsed or vetted by the MCW MSGC program; they are listed here as resources students may wish to learn about further. In addition, there are several MCW Student Organizations & Interest Groups and NSGC Special Interest Groups in which MSGC students may participate.

Graduate Student Connection Groups

LGBTQ+ Connection Group

The Graduate School LGBTQ+ Connection Group is a student-led program dedicated to facilitating connections among members of the LGBTQ+ community in graduate school. This group is meant to offer support for LGBTQ+ graduate students by fostering a safe and welcoming environment on campus, so that students can show up as their authentic selves and perform at their full potential. We provide the opportunity to get to know each other, share LGBTQ+ resources that are available on and off campus, as well as participate in group activities, both educationally and socially.

Women in Science Connection Group

The Women in Science group welcomes anyone who identifies as female to join us one Tuesday per month over the lunch hour! Women have a specific and unique experiences in academic research, and having a community to share those experiences with helps us all.

Diversity & Inclusion Connection Group

The Diversity & Inclusion Connection Group is a student-led group that has a primary focus on inclusion

in the Graduate School. This is a group that wants to assist students in feeling like they have a positive environment to go to not only feel included, but to also have an opportunity to talk about issues today regarding diversity & inclusion. Contact Damaris Nieves Torres or Dianise Rodriguez Garcia for more info!

International Student Connection Group

The International Student Connection Group is a dedicated group within the Graduate School that is meant to be a place for international students to go to connect with other international students. In these meetings, students can get to know one another while sharing their experiences as an international student. Contact Natalia Marin Mathieu for more info!

Student Parents Connection Group

The Student/Parent connection group brings together graduate students that have the dual responsibility of graduate school and parenting at MCW. Our goal is to provide a safe space to discuss the unique challenges we face raising children while pursuing higher education. We meet monthly, during the lunch hour, and are open to not only student-parents but those serving in any parent/guardian/caretaker role. Contact Amanda Marks or Carly Mascari for more

Genetic Counseling Groups

Name of Group: Dare To Be Aware

- Purpose/Mission: Raising awareness, promoting inclusion, striving for equity for disabled, chronically ill and neurodiverse genetic counsellors, current students and future students.
- Website: https://awaredare.wixsite.com/daretobeaware
    - Email: awaredare@gmail.com
    - Twitter: @AwareDare

Name of Group: GC Trainee Platform for Racial Justice (GCRJ)

- Purpose/Mission: to foster a community of genetic counseling trainees of all races, backgrounds, and identities that is grounded in becoming actively anti-racist. To facilitate self-reflection, self-education, and community learning about anti-racism among all members. To empower members to cultivate an enduring culture of genetic counselors who work towards dismantling systemic racism.
- Who Should Join: Current GC training program classes and recent graduates up to 1 year after graduation are invited to the membership.
- How to Join: https://sites.google.com/view/gcrj/join (includes info on joining GCRJ committees as well) or contact gcrjteam@gmail.com
- Other contact info: https://twitter.com/gcrjtweets

Name of Group: Minority Genetic Professionals Network

- Purpose/Mission: To create a place for racial and ethnic minority medical genetic professionals and those training to enter such professions to connect with one another for the purposes of mutual support and community outreach.
- Who Should Join: Medical genetic professionals and those training to be medical genetic professionals including medical geneticists, genetic counselors, genetics nurses, and physician assistants in genetics.
- How to Join: Link to join can be found at the website https://www.westernstatesgenetics.org/mgpn-resources/
- Other contact info:
    - Twitter: @minoritygenetic
    - Instagram: @minoritygenetics

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/minoritygenetic/

MCW All Student Handbook

See the All Student Handbook for additional information on the following:

- Disability accommodations
- MCW Leadership and Organizational Chart
- Student Health
- Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Regulation
- Academic Regulations
- Federal Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Technology Requirements and Services
- Honor Code and Professionalism
- Immunization Requirements

Graduate School Handbook

See the Graduate School Handbook for additional information on the following:

- Registration
- Tuition and Financial Aid
- Student Government/Graduate School Student Association
- Academic Regulation and Grading
- Evaluation Policies
- Grievances
- Committees of the Graduate School