



Master of Science in
Genetic Counseling
Program

2025-2026
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 Bulletin](#). **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 documents.** 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 term. 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 and Humanity](#). 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 & Humanity 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 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 full Program accreditation status to the MCW MSGC program for a 6-year period effective August 1, 2025. 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. A program achieving Accredited Program status may admit students, who, upon successfully completing their degree, will be deemed to have graduated from an ACGC-accredited program.

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 the first term they are enrolled. A confirmation email and confirmation on courses registered for will be sent to student's MCW email during the registration period. Subsequent terms, the student must use the MCW Connect application to self-enroll in courses based on the program requirements.

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
- Introduction to program faculty, staff and students
- General information about the MCW campus, schools, departments and resources
- Review of All Student Bulletin, 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: Thriving, Learning, & Professionalism
- Professional organizations, relevant events, & communication platforms
- Recent graduates perspectives panel

Section II: Academics

Curriculum Overview

| 1st Year | | 2nd Year | |
|------------------------------------|----|--|----|
| <i>Fall Term</i> | | <i>Fall Term</i> | |
| Molecules to Cells for GCs | 4 | Bioethics in Precision Medicine (online) | 3 |
| GC1: Skills & Practice | 2 | GC3: Psychosocial Issues | 2 |
| Research Methodologies | 2 | GC Seminar | 1 |
| GC Seminar | 1 | Clinical Practicum II (8 weeks) | 3 |
| Laboratory Foundations | 3 | Clinical Practicum III (8 weeks) | 3 |
| Total Term Credits | 12 | Research Thesis | 2 |
| | | Total Term Credits | 14 |
| <i>Spring Term</i> | | <i>Spring Term</i> | |
| Prenatal Genetics | 3 | GC4: Advanced Topics | 2 |
| GC2: Theory & Practice | 2 | GC Seminar | 1 |
| Cancer Genomics | 3 | Clinical Practicum IV (8 weeks) | 3 |
| GC Seminar | 1 | Clinical Practicum V (7 weeks) | 3 |
| Research Thesis | 1 | Research Thesis | 3 |
| Total Term Credits | 10 | Total Term Credits | 12 |
| <i>Summer Term</i> | | | |
| Medical Genomics (11 weeks online) | 3 | | |
| Clinical Practicum I (9 weeks) | 3 | | |
| Research Thesis | 2 | | |
| Total Term Credits | 8 | | |

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 practicums and fieldwork experiences in the second year. Additionally, research thesis development and supplementary activities will be incorporated spanning the entire curriculum.

Practicum & Fieldwork Experiences

Students are required to complete five practicums within the program, starting in the summer term and go through spring year 2. 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. neurology, cardiology, ophthalmology, reproductive medicine, etc). In some cases, the pediatric and adult specialty rotation will be combined for a comprehensive 16-week Medical Genetics (MedGen) placement. 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, advocacy, 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.

Evaluations for each of the practicums typically take place on 8-week intervals but may vary from 7-9 weeks. The majority of rotations will be 7-9 weeks (depending on which term) in length consisting of 16 days, schedule to be determined based on coursework schedule, supervisor availability and fieldwork site schedule. 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 needs, student's preference of location, exposure to desired specialty, student's professional interests, student's family, work and non-academic commitments, and socioeconomic concerns.

MedGen Rotation: Students may be participating in a MedGen clinical rotation that span the clinical Practicum II and Practicum III terms. Students in this rotation will work with their supervisors to

determine their activity practicum hours. These students will still undergo midpoint and final pass/fail evaluations. The ratings on skill levels will remain the same expectations.

Students may be 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.

Rotation opportunities are subject to supervisor availability and may only be offered at specific times of the year based on supervisor availability.

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
- 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: Multi-Specialty
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center-Green Bay: Multi-Specialty
- Hemophilia Outreach Center-Green Bay & Wausau: Adult and Pediatric Specialty
- Theda Care Regional Medical Center-Appleton: Multi-Specialty

Elective Rotation Opportunities

- Versiti Blood Center: Hematology, lab (Milwaukee Track)
- Education Administration: Virtual
- Public Health & Ethics: Virtual
- Community Engagement & Advocacy: – Virtual and in person experiences
- Variant Assessment (VarLab) Rotation: Virtual
- Biochemistry: Mayo Clinic and Children's Hospital

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 Research 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 at least once each 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: Pass/Fail (P/F).

Please see the [All Student Bulletin](#) 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.

It is expected that students submit original work for their assignments in their courses. The use of generative Artificial Intelligence in generating assignments and required course work does not meet that expectation and is, indeed, plagiarism. Submitting materials created by generative AI does not meet the academic integrity expectation, or ethical conduct, for graduate level learning. Genetic counseling education requires the unique application of critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving skills. Substitution of generative AI for original thought limits personal and professional learning.

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 Pass/Fail (P/F) 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 personal 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. Per ACGC requirements, students will input all cases into OASIS to maintain permanent record of their cases. 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 Pass/Fail (P/F) 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 Pass/ Fail (P/F) 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 "P" (pass) 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 terms, 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 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.

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. Additional information regarding academic standing, the appeal process, disciplinary procedures and sanctions can be found in the [Graduate School Handbook](#).

Professional Development

Participation and engagement in professional development will be evaluated by the Academic Progress and Professionalism Committee each term. Professional development is essential for graduate students training to become genetic counselors, as it equips them with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in practice. It strengthens communication, leadership, and advocacy abilities while fostering networking and mentorship within the field. These opportunities directly support the program's mission to cultivate exceptional genetic counseling leaders. Ultimately, professional development promotes lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape to prepare future leaders in the profession.

The following activities are an example of some of the professional development opportunities incorporated into the MSGC program:

- **National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) Student Membership** – The program will provide students with an annual NSGC student membership at the beginning of each calendar year. Students are encouraged to join Special Interest Groups (SIGs) which can enhance involvement in NSGC and expand career networks. SIGs offer opportunities to increase leadership skills, help plan targeted educational offerings, and simply meet other NSGC members with similar interests, areas of specialization or practice settings.
- **NSGC Annual Conference** – Students in their last year of study attend the NSGC Annual Conference. The program will provide conference registration and travel (airfare/bus/train/etc) expenses at no cost to the student. The students are responsible for lodging accommodations (hotel/AirBnB), meal expenses, and incidental costs.
- **Local/Regional Meetings** – Students attend the annual Wisconsin Genetic Counselors Association (WIGCA) Education Conference and the Wisconsin Genetics Exchange Genetics Exchange. There is no membership dues or registration costs for students to attend the WIGCA and Genetics Exchange meetings. Students should [register to join the WIGCA](#) as a student member in order to access networking & volunteer opportunities and stay updated on events & news.
- **Peer Consultation** - Students will partake in monthly peer consultation sessions for their cohort, which are coordinated by the MSGC program and facilitated by students and/or alumni. Peer consultation contributes to professional growth through the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and best practices with peers. Problem-solving is also enhanced by tackling challenges and complex cases collaboratively drawing on the collective knowledge and expertise within the group. Increased well-being is possible through connecting with colleagues who understand the unique demands of becoming a genetic counselor, fostering a sense of community, shared experiences, and creating a supportive network. Research has shown peer supervision can reduce the impact of burnout and compassion fatigue in counseling professions through fostering a community to process the challenging aspects of the career.

- **Cohort Connections** - The purpose of Cohort Connections is to provide MCW MSGC students with a monthly, peer-led space for mentoring, celebrating successes, sharing support, and practicing self-care. These gatherings are designed to strengthen a sense of belonging, community, and connection among students. The monthly activities are documented by a shared group photo posted in Teams.

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 term 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 term 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 term 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 term if that instructor teaches in more than one course.

Practicum/Fieldwork Experience Supervisor and Site evaluations: Students are able to complete an end of rotation evaluation for any supervisor they have worked with during a rotation. Students will be required to complete an end of rotation supervisor evaluation for any supervisor they have worked with for 6 or more case preps and a practicum site evaluation in OASIS. The supervisor and site evaluations will open 1 week before the end of the rotation and must be completed prior to the end of the rotation meeting with the Director of Fieldwork. 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 the summer Y1, Fall Y2, and Spring Y2 terms in OASIS. The Thesis Advisor evaluation will open 1 week before the end of the course and will remain open for 2 weeks. Students are encouraged to complete additional evaluations for their additional thesis committee members as appropriate.
- **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.

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.

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 discerning 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

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. Title IX states “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance[.]” All federal agencies that provide grants of financial assistance are required to enforce Title IX’s nondiscrimination mandate. ED gives grants of financial assistance to schools and colleges and to certain other entities, including vocational rehabilitation programs and libraries.

Examples of the types of discrimination that are covered under Title IX include but are not limited to: sex-based harassment; sexual violence; pregnancy discrimination; the failure to provide equal athletic opportunity; sex-based discrimination in a school’s science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses and programs; discriminatory application of dress code policies and/or enforcement; and retaliation. 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)
- Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination
- Social Media
- Authorship on Scientific and Scholarly Publications [Section IV: Student Resources](#)

[Section IV: Student Resources](#)

Academic Support & Enrichment

Student success is supported by assisting with a broad array of student needs and concerns including: the acclimation to increased academic demand, the integration of knowledge and skills, the navigation of institutional policies and requirements, the strategic planning for future career paths, the exploration of new strategies to excel academically, and others. Resources include, but are not limited to, academic consultation, peer tutoring, and boards preparation. It is highly encouraged for students meet early and often with academic support to proactively support their learning and completion of the program.

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.

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 Guidance Resources, 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 Bulletin](#) for details on health insurance.

Student Accessibility

Learners who wish to request accommodations at the Medical College of Wisconsin must complete the accommodation request process through the Office for Student Accessibility. This process ensures equal access and support across the full spectrum of learning environments at MCW, including classroom instruction, labs, assessments, and clinical rotations. See the [All Student Bulletin](#) for additional information on the process.

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 Bulletin](#) 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

MCW offers emergency loans to approved, registered students in need of temporary funds. Students do not need to be aid recipients to qualify for an emergency loan. Students meeting the criteria noted above may apply for emergency loans by contacting the Office of Student Accounts. Students are eligible for one emergency loan per term. The maximum amount that can be outstanding at any time under the Emergency Loan Program is \$2,000 per term. Please refer to the [All Student Bulletin](#) for the full policy.

Career Services

MCW Career Services provides individual career counseling, relevant career resources, workshops, and professional development programs to all MCW students. Career Services cultivates new and maintains existing campus and employer relations focused on career advancement and establish contacts to meet the career needs of students. Career assistance is available in individualized career coaching and professional workshops.

Campus Resources

- [Academic Support and Enrichment](#)
- [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 program leadership for help in finding 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.

Students are encouraged to contact the graduate school to learn more about connection groups at MCW. Please contact Skylar Ashworth at seisman@mcw.edu and request details about these opportunities.

MCW All Student Bulletin

See the [All Student Bulletin](#) for additional information on the following:

- Student Accessibility & 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