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

Welcome to the Master of Science (MS) in Genetic Counseling degree program at ASU. We are very excited you chose our program!

The mission of the ASU Genetic Counseling Program is: prepare genetic counselors to work in the field of genetics where they will apply their knowledge and unique skill set to help advance the understanding of genetics and genomics-related conditions in order to improve health outcomes within the communities where they work and live.

The objectives of the program are the following:

1. Instill a sense of personal, professional and societal responsibility to respect, honor and value each other, professional colleagues, clients and members of our communities
2. Ensure new graduates meet the Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors
3. Prepare new graduates to pass the American Board of Genetic Counseling certification examination
4. Equip new graduates to be able to secure a job in the healthcare field, a laboratory setting or other position relevant to their expertise in genetics and genetic counseling
5. Provide new graduates with the skills to be able to conduct research, read and write manuscripts related to the field of genetics/genomics and genetic counseling

The training model for our program is to integrate didactic coursework in genetics and genomics with research training and fieldwork participatory experiences which cover a broad spectrum of clinical specialties and practice environments. Throughout your training, you will also have opportunities to participate in supplemental curricular activities and community experiences related to genetics and genomics. The entire program is built around the Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors PBCs (a requirement from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling), which will prepare you to pass the American Board of Genetic Counseling® certification examination and thrive in your career as a genetic counselor.

The purpose of this Program Handbook is to provide graduate students in genetic counseling with the basic information needed throughout the course of study and to assist them in navigating their way through the graduate degree program and be prepared to sit for the American Board of Genetic Counseling® board certification exam. This Handbook is the primary resource for information regarding policies, regulations, and academic and clinical requirements necessary to complete the MS degree. This Handbook is not an exhaustive collection of all policies of ASU; students should also review the ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures, which is the final source regarding University policies on graduate programs. MS students are responsible for being informed about all academic and clinical requirements of the graduate program; some of the information provided in the Handbook also is available on the Genetic Counseling, M.S. (website to be added later) and in Department and Office of Graduate Education publications. Additional questions and concerns may arise that are not formally addressed in these sources.
The Program Leadership for the MS Genetic Counseling Program will be a valuable asset as you progress through the program and will be discussed in more detail throughout the Handbook. Academic and clinical faculty members also are available for advice, guidance, and consultation regarding all academic and clinical requirements, policies, and procedures.

**M.S. Program Leadership**

**Contacts and Location**

Katherine Hunt Brendish, Clinical Professor. PhD, M.S, CGC Program Director  
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A list of faculty and staff associated with the MS Program are listed at the end of this handbook. You can access further information about each individual by utilizing the College of Health Solutions Search page. Information regarding the faculty includes research, teaching and public work.
Program General Admissions Information

Admission and Time Limits

Students are admitted to the Master’s program in Genetic Counseling at Arizona State University. Full details regarding Admission requirements are located on the Genetic Counseling (website to be added) under the Admissions Tab. Time limits apply for completion of the MS degree. All work applied toward the degree must be completed within **6 consecutive years**. The 3 years begin with the first course that is included on a student’s approved Program of Study (i.e., the official form listing the academic semester hours you must complete during your graduate training). For example, if the first course taken was during fall semester, 2022, then you must complete all degree requirements no later than August, 2025.

Admission Deferral

Due to the competitive nature of the admission process, the program does **not** grant admission deferral. Applicants unable to begin coursework in the term in which they applied and were admitted are encouraged to reapply in a future cycle. Exceptions to this policy will be considered for unexpected medical issues on a case-by-case basis.

Tuition and Related Expenses

For current tuition and fee information, please reference the Tuition and Fees [schedule](#) updated annually by Student Business Services.

In addition to tuition and program fees, there are several expenses related to software management and training programs. The costs listed below include the total amount for both years of the program.

1. Typhon, an online management system for clinical evaluations and case log $90.00
2. My Clinical Exchange – an onboarding orientation and health requirement required by most medical facilities in Arizona $100.00
3. Other variable costs associated drug screening and background checks $300.00
4. Textbooks $700.00
5. Parking [fees](#)

Further information about these expenses will be available during orientation.

Financial Assistance

The number of graduate students provided with financial support varies from semester to semester depending on state and federal appropriations. The support, which is offered on a competitive basis, consists of tuition scholarships, graduate teaching, research, and clinical assistantships, and Veterans Affairs traineeships. All students are considered for financial assistance at the time of their admission. The main criterion used in making decisions about an appointment is academic performance.
There are also a number of options for financial assistance for graduate study through the Graduate College including scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, student loans and work-study. More information can be found [here](#). Graduate students seeking financial aid counseling should contact the main Student Financial Aid office in the Student Services building on the Tempe campus at 855-278-5080.

**Academic Advising**

Prior to orientation for your first year, you will receive an email specifying the classes that you need to take during the fall of your first year. Please note that a late fee may apply if you do not register approximately two weeks prior to the first class. Academic calendar deadlines can be found [here](#). PLEASE REGISTER FOR ALL COURSES PRIOR TO THAT DATE. During orientation week, you will meet with your faculty mentor and the rest of the Program Leadership team.

During new student orientation, a faculty mentor will be assigned to each student. The faculty mentor is a genetic counselor from Program Leadership (including the Program Director) who will serve as the student’s faculty advisor for the two years you are enrolled in the program. The faculty mentor will be expected to reach out to their assigned student at least twice during every semester to find out how they are doing.

Your faculty mentor and the Program Director is to be available and work with you if any problems arise due to medical, academic, or clinical issues during the program. You will be meeting with your faculty mentor on a quarterly basis during both years of the program. During these meetings you will be discussing the progress you are making in the program as well as any concerns or issues that arise. Three months prior to graduation, you will meet with your faculty mentor to review all graduation readiness and discuss the graduation check-out protocols for the program. Along with your faculty mentor, the Program Director can also support you throughout your training with concerns related to coursework as well as clinical and academic performance. The Program Director will receive a copy of the information reviewed during your quarterly meetings with your faculty mentor. This will be placed in your student file.

**Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS)**

Qualified students with disabilities who require disability accommodations throughout their program are encouraged to make their requests to the program director prior to the start of the program either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) is required. Disability information is confidential.

**Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations**

Students who feel they will need disability accommodations during their program but have not registered with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) should contact SAILS immediately. Students should contact the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS), campus-specific location. Contact information can be found on the
SAILS website. SAILS offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. Check the SAILS website for eligibility and documentation policies.

Email: DRC@asu.edu; SAILS Phone: (480) 965-1234; SAILS FAX: (480) 965-0441

Wellness Resources

Graduate education can be stressful and demanding and we want to be sure students are aware of resources available to them for additional support during these seasons. The 10 Best Practices in Graduate Student Wellbeing and Graduate Wellness Resources are available for student review. In addition, ASU Counseling Services are available 24/7.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. Sexual violence and prevention resources.
Program of Study for the Master of Science (MS) Degree in Genetic Counseling

Your program will consist of a range of didactic, clinical, research and supplemental experiences. The specific academic courses, fieldwork experiences and research you complete during your program will be determined by ASU requirements, and ACGC Accreditation Standards which are based on the Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors. All students are required to complete a thesis. A total of 71 semester credits is required for all students, including 56 semester credits of required coursework and 15 credits of fieldwork experiences.

Graduation Requirements

1. A total of 71 credit hours are required as follows:
   • Successful completion (i.e., grade of B- or better) of 56 credit hours of graduate academic coursework, including:
     i. 50 credits for core courses
     ii. 6 credits for thesis or applied project
   • Successful completion (i.e., satisfactory evaluation) of 15 credits of Fieldwork Experience (GCO583/683). The typical sequence of registration is:
     i. 1 credit during the first spring semester;
     ii. 10 credits during the summer semester between the first and second year;
     iii. 4 total credits- 2 credits each semester during fall and spring semester of the second year.
2. Successful completion of a thesis and oral defense in the spring semester of the second year.
3. Participation in at least 50 genetic counseling interactions (40 of which involve individuals being evaluation for risk of or affected by diverse genetic conditions across the lifespan and must be non-simulated and not a research participant) during Fieldwork Experiences (GCO 583/683).

Curriculum for the MS degree

Table 1 lists the academic MS degree coursework for the 2022 entering class. Course descriptions and necessary prerequisites can be found in the Graduate Catalog. Archived handbooks are located on the CHS Graduate Student Site.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GCO#</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Term Offered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>Fieldwork Preparatory (1)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>530</td>
<td>Genetic Counseling Fundamentals (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540</td>
<td>Foundations of Medical Genetics (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO/DNP 659</td>
<td>Embryology &amp; Genetics (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCD 501</td>
<td>Biostatistics and Data Management (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>691</td>
<td>Journal Club (1 credit each semester)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Fall &amp; Spring C Yr. 2 Fall &amp; Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>560</td>
<td>Practice of Genetic Counseling (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>570</td>
<td>Clinical Genetics (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650</td>
<td>Cancer, Cardiac Genomics &amp; Precision Medicine (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620</td>
<td>Genetic Counseling Techniques (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBC 640</td>
<td>Family &amp; Couples in Primary Care (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>583/683</td>
<td>Fieldwork Experience (1 credit spring, yr. 1, 10 credits summer &amp; 2 creds each fall and spring yr.2)</td>
<td>Yr. 1 Spring C, Summer C Yr. 2 Fall and Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599/593</td>
<td>Thesis/applied project (3 credits each semester)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Fall and Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>625</td>
<td>Cultural, Ethical &amp; Legal Aspects of Genetics (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>630</td>
<td>Advanced Genetic Counseling Techniques (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610</td>
<td>Laboratory Fundamentals &amp; Population Screening (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Fall C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCD 562</td>
<td>Bioethical Issues in Applied Biomedicine (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Fall A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>660</td>
<td>Professional Issues for Genetic Counselors (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Spring C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCD 520</td>
<td>Population Health (3)</td>
<td>Yr. 2 Spring C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required:** 56 credits of coursework and thesis/applied project and; 15 credits of fieldwork experience

**NOTE:** All courses are required and may not be waived even if the student took a similar course prior to coming to ASU.

### Course sequence

The curriculum was designed to develop new learning skills, analytical skills, and clinical skills that are compatible with the Practice-Based Competencies (PBC). Students are expected to earn a grade of B- or better for each of the core courses. Fieldwork and supplemental experiences are also integrated into the curriculum to promote the development of the skills and activities necessary to demonstrate mastery of the PBC.
The following tables illustrate the sequence of courses with fieldwork and supplemental experiences

Year 1 Courses (all required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall C (15 weeks)</td>
<td>Spring C (15 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 510 Fieldwork Preparatory (1)</td>
<td>GCO 560 Practice of Genetic Counseling (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 530 Genetic Counseling Fundamentals (3)</td>
<td>GCO 570 Clinical Genetics (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 540 Foundations of Medical Genetics (3)</td>
<td>GCO 650 Cancer, Cardiac Genomics, &amp; Precision Medicine (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO/DNP 659 Embryology &amp; Genetics(3)</td>
<td>GCO 620 Genetic Counseling Techniques (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 691 Journal Club (1)</td>
<td>GCO 691 Journal Club (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GCO 583/683 Fieldwork Experience (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall B (7 weeks)</td>
<td>Spring A (7 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCD 501 Biostatistics and Data Management (3)</td>
<td>Supplemental Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring B (7 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IBC 640 Family &amp; Couples in Primary Care (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summer and Year 2 Courses (all required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall C (15 weeks)</td>
<td>Spring C (15 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 583/683 Fieldwork Experience (10)</td>
<td>GCO 625 Cultural, Ethical &amp; Legal Aspects of Genetics (3)</td>
<td>GCO 660 Professional Issues for Genetic Counselors (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Experience</td>
<td>GCO 610 Laboratory Fundamentals &amp; Population Screening s (3)</td>
<td>GCO 691 Journal Club (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 691 Journal Club (1)</td>
<td>GCO 599 Thesis/GCO 593 (3)</td>
<td>GCO 583/683 Fieldwork Experience (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 599 Thesis/GCO 593 (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCO 583/683 Fieldwork Experience (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall A</td>
<td>Fall B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCD 562 Bioethical Issues in Applied Biomedicine (3)</td>
<td>Supplemental Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading and Evaluation Policies for Courses

Students will be evaluated in their core course work (50 credits) through assessments which are included as part of each course requirement. Students are expected to earn a grade of B- or better for each of the core courses.

Once students begin their coursework in the fall semester of year one, they are monitored and evaluated by the course instructor throughout each course with assessments/assignments. These assessments are positioned throughout each course (and not just mid-semester or at the end of the course) to help the instructor gauge how well students are grasping new knowledge, concepts and skills. If a student is struggling in a specific area, the course instructor will be expected to work individually with the student, outside of class time, to review the material together in an effort to help the student feel more confident with the instructional content.

If the course instructor has dedicated time outside of the class room to work with the student and the student is still unable to meet the grade expectation of B- or higher, the course instructor is required to notify the student’s faculty mentor and the Program Director and inform them of the nature of the particular concern with a student before the end of the semester.

Students who receive one B- or below, in a course will be expected to work with the course instructor (with assistance from the faculty mentor when appropriate) to demonstrate improvement in the areas where the student did most poorly. The student will receive an incomplete grade “I” in the class while working on the improving their grade. The student will be encouraged to complete assignments/assessments assigned by the instructor and improve their grade to above a B- within a semester, but will have up to a year per Graduate School policy to improve their grade. The student will not have to re-enroll in the course or pay extra tuition during this time. The program will not hold back the student from continuing on in the next semester of courses or scheduled Fieldwork Experiences. The student will be required to work on the extra assignments while continuing on in the program. We will therefore encourage students to complete the remediation work during the break between semesters, when possible. The type of remediation required will depend on what area of the curriculum the student is struggling.

If a student is requiring extra time with remediation to improve their course grade as was described in the last paragraph, or if the student is unable to complete a course because of illness or conditions beyond the student’s control, and they have completed 80% of the course and are earning a grade of C or better, they can request an incomplete grade for the course. An incomplete grade will allow students the opportunity to complete the course (with the same instructor) at a later date but no later than a calendar year from the time which the request was approved. Once the student has satisfactorily completed the coursework, the incomplete will be removed from their transcript.

In a situation of remediation, the program will encourage the student to complete the remediation no later than one semester after the course was completed. This is so they can stay on track with their cohort. If for some reason, the student is unable to improve their performance in this
allotted time, they will have up to a year to improve the grade (without paying extra tuition to repeat the course). If the student is struggling to maintain a B- in only one course, the student will continue to work with their course director, the faculty mentor and the Program Director on their continued learning plan for this one course. If the student is failing to maintain a B- for multiple courses, then the student is at risk for academic probation and the remediation plan will be described in the paragraphs below.

Fieldwork Training

Types of Fieldwork Training

There are two types of fieldwork training experiences offered during the M.S. Genetic Counseling degree program; participatory and supplemental experiences.

Participatory Fieldwork Experiences

A participatory fieldwork experience involves participation (where you are actively involved in multiple components of a genetic counseling encounter) with an individual who is being evaluated for risk of or affected by diverse genetic conditions across the lifespan. To meet graduation requirements for the program, you must have a minimum of 50 participatory cases with individuals who are being evaluated in the specialty areas of prenatal, pediatric, cancer and other adult conditions, with no one specialty dominating. 40 of these required 50 cases must involve individuals who are non-simulated patients and not a research participant. You are encouraged to obtain more than 50 participatory cases throughout your training experience, but only 50 are necessary to meet requirements for graduation.

All 50 participatory cases must be supervised by an experienced ABGC©/ABMG(G)/CAGC certified genetic counselor. The fieldwork experiences will be distributed in a variety of settings including clinical, laboratory, and/or other environments. In addition, the fieldwork participatory cases must represent more than one service delivery mode, such as telephone, group, in-person and/or telemedicine. The Fieldwork Coordinator for the program will be responsible for placing all students at their fieldwork sites and will work with the sites to ensure students are exposed to the necessary types and numbers of cases to meet the requirements for graduation. The time requirement for each fieldwork experience will vary by site and are summarized below.

Participatory fieldwork experiences will begin in the spring semester of year one. The spring semester fieldwork experience consists of two seven-week (4-5 hours/day) experiences at different clinical sites. The purpose of the first participatory experience is to begin to apply your knowledge and participate in genetic counseling cases, as is deemed appropriate based on your clinical supervisor’s observations of your skills and your own level of comfort with your skill set at this point in your training.

The summer fieldwork experience is an eight-week, full time (five days a week for 8 hours/day) experience. Students will be placed by the Fieldwork Coordinator at a training site where they are supervised by an experienced ABGC/ABMG(G)/CAGC certified genetic counselor. The specialties offered during the summer include prenatal, pediatrics and adult genetics. During the
summer semester, students will have the opportunity to build upon the genetic counseling skills learned in the spring semester.

During the fall semester of the second year, students will have the opportunity to interact with individuals/families affected by adult genetic conditions: cancer, cardiology and general adult genetics. As your genetic counseling skill set advances, so too will the time requirements for the fieldwork experiences. In the spring semester of the second year, students will have an opportunity to participate in supplemental fieldwork experiences (described below) such as industry, and research, as well as supplemental experiences (adult genetics, pediatric or prenatal), if the student requires additional time in any of these settings. Fall and spring semester fieldwork experiences will be two full days a week for seven weeks (2 different sites each semester).

Possible fieldwork sites with their respective specialty areas are listed below.

1. Arizona Oncology- Adult Genetics; Cancer
2. Banner/MD Anderson Cancer Clinic- Adult Genetics; Cancer
3. Banner University Medical Center Phoenix- Adult Genetics; Cancer
4. Dignity Health- Adult Genetics; Cancer, Neurogenetics & Cardiogenetics
5. Dignity Health- Prenatal Genetics
6. Honor Health- Adult Genetics; Cancer
7. Integrated Genetics- Prenatal Genetics
8. Mayo Clinic- Adult Genetic; General & Cancer
9. Fetal Diagnostic Center- Prenatal Genetics
10. Phoenix Children’s Hospital: Pediatrics and Adult Genetics
11. Genome Medical- Prenatal, Pediatrics and Adult Genetics

Supplemental Fieldwork Experiences

A supplemental fieldwork experience includes interactions with clients who are being evaluated for risk of or affected by diverse genetic conditions across the lifespan by: a genetics professional who is not certified by ABGC/CAGC or by the ABMG(G), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) in Medical Genetics and Genomics, or the Canadian College of Medical Geneticists (CCMG-CCGM) in Clinical (Medical) Genetics; a non-genetics provider (physician, nurse practitioners, etc.; observational experiences; international fieldwork experiences; public health genetics-related activities and settings; experiences with genetic counselor who are not ABGC/ABMGC/CAGC certified; and involvement with support groups and other advocacy organizations.
Supplemental experiences will be offered throughout the first year, summer semester and second year of the program. Possible supplemental experiences are listed below.

1. Mayo Clinic- Observation of genetic consults performed by physicians, nurse practitioners and medical geneticists. Adult genetics clinics: cancer and general.)


3. Mayo Clinic Laboratory- Observations of the role of a genetic counselor working at a large international genetic testing laboratory. Variant interpretation and utilization management.

4. TGen- An Arizona-based, nonprofit medical research institute working to understand the genetic components of common and complex diseases. Research experience.

5. Myriad Genetics- A genetic testing laboratory based in Salt Lake Utah providing genetic testing services for a variety of genetic disorders. Industry, utilization management.


7. BRCATeers Support Group- A support group for individuals with a BRCA mutation.


9. Huntington Disease Society of America Support Group Meeting

10. Camp Knot a Phe-PKU Camp in Arizona- A family camp for individuals with metabolic disorders requiring a low protein diet.


**Typhon**

Typhon is a secure, cloud-based student tracking platform where students will log client encounters. Supervisors at each practicum setting will use the Typhon evaluation form to evaluate you on the competencies that you have demonstrated during your rotation with them.

These evaluations will contribute to your grade for participatory fieldwork experiences. Clinical supervisors and program faculty will use Typhon to sign off on cases and track and manage student progress with fieldwork experiences.

Typhon has a one-time registration fee for each student. During orientation, students will receive an email on your ASU email account from Typhon prompting you to register and pay the
required fee. You will receive a training in Typhon at the beginning of the program.

Clinical Competencies and Case Log for Fieldwork Participatory Experiences

To document the development of the Practice-Based Competencies during your participatory fieldwork experiences, you will be evaluated at the conclusion of each fieldwork experience by your primary clinical supervisor. At the beginning of each fieldwork participatory experience, you will outline your goals for that experience with your supervisor and review the learning objective of the fieldwork experience (the learning objectives can also be identified in the class catalogue for course GCO 583/683 Fieldwork Experience). A mid-point evaluation will occur with your clinical supervisor. At this point in the experience, you can adjust your goals for the remainder of the experience as necessary. A final comprehensive evaluation will be completed by your clinical supervisor(s) at the conclusion of your fieldwork experience and reviewed with you. The evaluation will be shared with the Fieldwork Coordinator and the Program Director as well as maintained in your student record.

All participatory cases will be logged into Typhon and co-signed by your clinical supervisor. It is critical that your cases be logged in a timely manner and signed by your clinical supervisor. This is the primary mechanism for the program to track your 50 required participatory cases required for graduation.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork participatory experience, you will be asked to evaluate the fieldwork site and your clinical supervisor. These evaluations will be kept confidential and sent to you by the Fieldwork Coordinator. Your evaluation will not be shared with the clinical supervisors until after you have received a final grade in the course. Further, the data is aggregated prior to sharing with the clinical supervisors.

If there are any issues that arise either with your clinical supervisor or anything related to the fieldwork site during your experience, you should contact the Fieldwork Coordinator (Rebecca.Luiten@bannerhealth.com) or the Program Director (khuntbrendish@asu.edu) immediately.

Supplemental Fieldwork Experiences

While you will not be formally evaluated on your supplemental fieldwork experiences, you will be asked to complete a summative assignment at the conclusion of the experience to reflect on how the experience contributed to your development as a genetic counselor.

Grading and Evaluation Policies for Fieldwork Experiences

During fieldwork experiences, students will receive feedback on their genetic counseling skills at the conclusion of every genetic counseling session. Students will undergo a more formal evaluation mid-experience, as well as at the conclusion of their fieldwork experience. The final grade for each fieldwork experience will be based on your fieldwork final evaluation completed by your clinical supervisor and your overall score will be: “Y” (satisfactory) grade.

If a student receives an unsatisfactory performance on their Fieldwork Experience, despite extra
time spent by the student’s faculty mentor, the Fieldwork Coordinator and/or the Program Director working with the student, the student will be expected to repeat the same specialty of Fieldwork Experience (but not necessarily at the same clinical site or with the same clinical supervisor). The student will receive a “Z” grade for the Fieldwork Experience that needs to be repeated. A “Z” grade represents students who do not satisfactorily complete a course and are expected to work until they achieve a satisfactory grade. Once the Fieldwork Experience has been repeated satisfactorily, the student’s grade will be reassigned to the appropriate grade (in this case a satisfactory, “Y”). Because the “Z” grade designates a course is still in-process, the student will not be charged tuition to complete the extra Fieldwork Experience.

Repeating the Fieldwork Experience will not delay the student’s graduation due to the fact that the program will identify an alternative experience for the student immediately after failing the original experience. This will fit into the student’s schedule so that the student will remain with their cohort. This could mean the student does an intense fieldwork experience (five days a week for two weeks) at the new clinical site. This could also mean that the student will need to “fit in” an extra fieldwork experience before they start their summer fieldwork experiences. This will all depend on when they fail their experience. The academic schedule at ASU does allow for flexibility given the staggered summer schedule available for students. Students can register for the first five weeks of the summer (session A), the last five weeks (session B) or the full summer semester at seven weeks (session C). There are also several weeks off between the fall and spring semesters and summer and fall semester starting when they could complete this extra fieldwork experience. If the student receives a “Z” on a Fieldwork Experience in their second year, close to graduation, the program will make every effort to fit in a more condensed version of the fieldwork experience for the student so they can graduate with their cohort. The student will be required to earn a satisfactory on the repeated Fieldwork Experience before graduating.
Clinical Expectations and Professionalism

Enrollment in Fieldwork Experiences place significant time demands on students during the workweek. Students registered for fieldwork experiences should be prepared to devote approximately 10-20 hours per week to the preparation, work in the clinic, and follow-up activities. All students enrolled in fieldwork experiences are expected to abide by the NSGC Code of Ethics. Violations of the Code of Ethics may result in permanent dismissal from practicum placement opportunities and may additionally subject the student to dismissal from the academic degree program. Additionally, strict adherence to HIPAA guidelines is also essential to protect the confidentiality of patients served in our campus clinics and in off-campus internship facilities. It is important to understand that the welfare of the patient is just as important as the training needs of the student. Participation in clinic should be seen as a privilege, rather than a right. Client abandonment is unprofessional conduct. Withdrawing from clinic to avoid receiving a failing grade constitutes client abandonment and is not acceptable. While working in the clinical setting, students are expected to maintain professional attire and demeanor. Unprofessional conduct, or any conduct that compromises the quality of services to clients, may result in dismissal from clinical practicum placements and from the academic degree program.

Furthermore, students must abide by ASU’s academic integrity policy and student code of conduct.

Health and Training Requirements

Student must provide documentation of various health and training requirements prior to the initiation of clinic. Some affiliation sites require additional documentation prior to accepting students on site. Students who are unable to provide the necessary documentation will be unable to provide services and run the risk of delaying their clinical training until the subsequent semester. Students may not be integrated into the training program after our clinical sessions have begun. You need to update relevant health training, and TB testing annually and show proof of the flu virus at most clinical locations. Also, you must make sure you supply your internship sites with necessary verifications prior to your internship placement. You may need to order additional Background checks or drug testing depending on the requirements of the site. The clinical supervisor has the right, and likely the obligation, to terminate a student’s placement if these requirements are not met.

COVID Vaccination Policies

Students who participate in an internship, rotation, observation, applied project, or other experiential learning opportunity with a clinical partner are required to comply with the site’s policies related to vaccinations for common communicable diseases. The majority of ASU’s clinical community partners require proof of COVID-19 vaccination.

Students who are unable to be vaccinated for medical or religious reasons may be able to make arrangements for a reasonable accommodation, depending on the policies of the clinical site. Accommodations may be limited in number and may require additional safeguards such as
testing, personal protective equipment, or alternative/limited duties.

Students who are concerned about their ability to complete a course or program requirement with a clinical partner due to their vaccination status should contact their instructor or program director to discuss the possibility of placement at another site or the process to apply for a reasonable accommodation. Alternative placements and reasonable accommodations are dependent on the availability and policies of clinical partners. Students who anticipate needs relating to vaccination requirements should contact their instructor or program director as soon as possible.

**Confidentiality and HIPAA Policy**

It is our professional duty to preserve confidentiality of our clients at all times. Moreover, the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires all health care records and other individually identifiable health information (protected health information) used or disclosed to us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally, be kept confidential. This federal law gives the patient significant new rights to understand and control how health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse personal health information. The ASU Genetic Counseling Program and the PCC@asu comply with HIPAA. All student clinicians receive HIPAA training annually and are required to sign a workforce confidentiality agreement prior to starting clinical practicum. Note that violations of HIPAA require us to file a report and present an action plan to remediate the violation. Students who violate HIPAA guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including a failing grade for the clinic rotation and/or dismissal from the Master’s in Genetic Counseling Program. Please take this seriously. You must NEVER have patient information on your personal data devices. Do not take-home protocols or other records that contain client data.

**Thesis Option**

Students will enroll in a total of 6 hours of thesis. This is usually done with the following courses: GCO 691 Journal Club (offered in the fall and spring semesters of years one and two) and GCO 599 Thesis (offered for 3 hours in the fall and spring semesters of year two). Students will learn about the research process in the fall semester of year one during HCD 501 Biostatistics and Data Management. Throughout the Journal Club courses and the Thesis courses, students will be asked to achieve the following benchmarks to track progress towards completing the thesis.

**Fall semester-year 1**
- Learn about the research process (including how to develop a research question) HCD 501
- Identify a research project/question and choose a thesis committee chair. This is discussed and accomplished during Journal Club GCO 691.

**Spring semester-year 1 (GCO 691- Journal Club)**
- Compile a thesis committee
- Complete a written prospectus of your thesis project
• Submit for IRB approval (if applicable)

**Summer** (students will work independently with their thesis committee)
- Data collection
- Analysis of data/findings
- Description of research findings

**Fall semester- year 2 (GCO 599- Thesis)**
- Complete analysis of data/findings and description of research findings
- Submit a first draft of thesis to committee members
- Revise draft and prepare for oral defense

**Spring semester-year 2 (GCO 599- Thesis)**
- Schedule oral defense
- Conduct oral defense
- Submit final draft of written thesis
- Submit student abstract to NSGC or local genetics conferences (such as Arizona Genetics Alliance)

**Graduate Program Committee**

**Graduate Program Committee: Thesis**

During the first semester of your first year (fall semester), you need to select a thesis committee chair whose expertise corresponds to the area in which you would like to complete your thesis research. The Research Coordinator for the program will assist you with selecting a thesis chair who shares your interests. Once you identify a faculty member, you will need to meet with the faculty member individually to discuss your mutual interests. Only those listed as *academic faculty* are eligible to serve as a thesis chair.

The thesis committee consists of your thesis chair and at least two additional committee members. Your thesis chair will help you select these individuals. As with the thesis chair, the other members of your committee should have an expertise/interest that corresponds to your thesis research topic. At least one of the remaining two committee members must be selected from the academic faculty. The third committee member may also be drawn from those listed as clinical faculty, adjunct faculty, or from faculty in other departments at ASU. You will work with your thesis chair to finalize your Program of Study. Graduate committees of students pursuing the MS thesis option will approve the thesis prospectus, direct and approve the thesis, and administer the oral defense of this research.

**Thesis Oral Defense**

A requirement for the thesis is a final examination that is comprised of the oral defense of the thesis and the completion of the written thesis. A number of deadlines and formatting requirements must be observed with regard to the written thesis and the thesis defense; these can
be found on the Graduate College [website](#). The student’s thesis chair will coordinate administration of the defense and have the responsibility for submitting final approval forms to the Graduate College.

**Applied Project Option**

Students who choose the applied project as their culminating experience will work under the supervision of the Research Coordinator and a selected faculty member (clinical or academic faculty members qualify) to identify and complete a project in a related area of study. Students will be expected to attend GCO 691-Journal Club and GCO 599-Thesis/GCO 593-Applied Project courses as part of preparing and completing their projects. The topic and scope of the project will be determined by the students, the Research Coordinator and faculty member who has expertise in the area covered in the applied project.

Students electing to complete an applied project will be asked to achieve the following benchmarks to track progress towards completing the applied project.

**Fall semester-year 1**
- Learn about the research process (including how to develop a research question) HCD 501
- Identify a topic for your project and choose a faculty member to serve as your project mentor. This is discussed and accomplished during Journal Club GCO 691.

**Spring semester-year 1 (GCO 691- Journal Club)**
- Draft and outline of your project including the following information: goal(s) of project; methods for completing project; timeline for completion and; format of final product (paper, presentation, digital portfolio, etc.)
- Obtain feedback on your outline from your fellow students and submit outline for approval by your faculty member and the Research Coordinator. Note: approval for your project must occur this semester.

**Summer (students will work independently on their projects)**
- Execute the project
- Provide bi-monthly updates to your faculty member and the Research Coordinator

**Fall semester- year 2 (GCO 593- Applied Project)**
- Submit a first draft of your project for review by your fellow classmates
- Submit revised draft of your project to your faculty member and the Research Coordinator

**Spring semester-year 2 (GCO 593- Applied Project)**
- Incorporate the feedback from your faculty member and the Research Coordinator into the project and prepare final draft
- Present your project to your fellow students
- Include your project in your online portfolio (if applicable)
Grading and Evaluation Policies for Thesis and Applied Project

As long as students attend class (Journal Club/GCO 691 and Thesis/GCO 599/GCO 593) and demonstrate acquisition of the learning objectives described for this course, they will earn a satisfactory “Y” at the completion of each semester.

Tracking student progress on the thesis project and is a priority for the program leadership. Each semester, the students will be required to demonstrate important benchmarks towards completion of their thesis or applied projects. These benchmarks are summarized in the previous two sections- thesis option and applied project option.

To ensure that students are progressing on their thesis project, students will discuss their projects and present the required documentation that identifies meeting a specific benchmark during Journal Club (GCO 691) in year one and Thesis/Applied Project (GCO 599/GCO 593) in year two. The Research Coordinator will utilize class time for students to ask questions, present relevant and interesting findings on their projects and provide feedback to fellow students. Both first and second-year students will take this class together, however the course requirements for demonstrating progress towards thesis completion will be based on their year in the program. This is a seminar course and therefore, combining first and second year students will allow the students to learn from each other and provide an opportunity for students to learn and practice mentoring skills.

If, at mid-point in the semester, the student is not making the necessary progress to meet the required benchmarks in the thesis/applied projects course, the Research Coordinator will meet with the student outside of class time (such as during office hours held by the Research Coordinator). During this meeting, the Research Coordinator will talk with the student to identify reasons the student is not meeting the benchmarks. If necessary, the Research Coordinator will provide the student with extra resources to help them catch up. Together they will write tangible goals for what the student should be accomplishing with deadlines for when each goal needs to be completed as well as the method the student will use to demonstrate they have completed their goals. As long as a student is progressing with their benchmarks for completion of their project, the Research Coordinator will give the student the grade of satisfactory or “Y” at the conclusion of every semester.
Academic and Clinical Standards for MS Degree

The following is a summary of the academic and clinical standards to which all students must adhere. It is the responsibility of all graduate students to be familiar with the current Academic and Clinical Standards.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Per Graduate College guidelines, graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average (GPA) to maintain satisfactory academic progress in the program and in order to graduate. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 are placed on academic probation, and are required to complete an academic improvement plan. Graduate College’s guidelines for satisfactory academic progress.

To demonstrate satisfactory performance, graduate students pursuing the MS degree will be expected to:

- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average each semester.
- Earn no more than one unsatisfactory grade during their entire program (i.e., a grade below a B- in an academic course or a fieldwork experience.
- A single instance of a grade below B- in an academic course may be permissible, but that grade may not be included on the Program of Study (iPOS). For that course to be included, the student must demonstrate understanding of the course material by earning a B- or better on assessments written by the course instructor.
- Receive no more than one incomplete in a given semester.
- Pass the thesis requirements.

Following the first, single instance of unsatisfactory performance (unsatisfactory grade or more than one incomplete in a given semester), the student must:

- Meet with their faculty mentor and the course instructor to develop an academic improvement plan and schedule time for additional course instruction.
- Meet with their faculty mentor each semester thereafter to review progress.
- Repeat the Fieldwork Experience where the student failed to earn a “Y” grade and achieve a satisfactory grade.
- Earn a “S” in the Fieldwork Experience in which an unsatisfactory grade was earned based on the course evaluation written by the clinical supervisor.
- Must earn a B- or better in the academic course in which the incomplete was obtained based on the assessments written by the course instructor.

The student is on academic probation until the conditions specified in the academic improvement plan are met and the student’s GPA is above 3.0.
**Program Dismissal**

Students may be dismissed from the program:
- If students are unable to raise the GPA to a 3.00 within one year, the program leadership may recommend the student for dismissal from the program.
- Following two instances of unsatisfactory academic performance, regardless of the semester in which the poor performance occurred.
- For a single violation of academic integrity.
- For seriously compromising the relations of the program with the public.
- For breaches of ethical judgment or professional responsibility.
- For serious instances of personality or character traits inappropriate for the professional roles for which the student is attempting to prepare.
- Failing to satisfactorily complete the thesis requirement, according to consensus of the thesis committee members.

The program policy allows for students to take up to three years to complete the program and this will allow for flexibility for students who require an extra year to complete their Fieldwork Experiences or retake a course.

**Continuous Enrollment Requirement**

Once admitted to a graduate degree program or graduate certificate program, students must be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, conducting a doctoral prospectus, working on or defending theses or dissertations, taking comprehensive examinations, taking Graduate Foreign Language Examinations, or in any other way utilizing university resources, facilities or faculty time.

Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students taking examinations, completing culminating experiences, conducting a doctoral prospectus, defending theses or dissertations, or graduating from the degree program.

To maintain continuous enrollment the credit hour(s) must:

- Appear on the student’s *Plan of Study*, OR
- Be research (592, 792), thesis (599), dissertation (799), or continuing registration (595, 695, 795), OR
- Be a graduate-level course.

Grades of “W” and/or “X” are not considered valid registration for continuous enrollment purposes. “W” grades are received when students officially withdraw from a course after the drop/add period. “X” grades are received for audit courses. Additionally, students completing work for a course in which they received a grade of “I” must maintain continuous enrollment as defined previously. Graduate students have one year to complete work for an incomplete grade; if the work is not complete and the grade changed within one year, the “I” grade becomes permanent. Additional information regarding incomplete grades can be found at [here](#).
Incomplete Grades

The College of Health Solutions will consider an incomplete grade request when the following factors are present:

- The student has been completing acceptable work (grade of C or better) and has completed 80% of the course.
- The student is unable to complete the course due to illness or conditions beyond the student’s control.
- The student can complete the unfinished work with the same instructor.

Students have up to one calendar year to finish incomplete work. Students must complete the incomplete request form and submit it to their instructor for review and processing. If a student does not complete the missing coursework by the date that is agreed upon on the incomplete request form, the instructor may change the grade to what was earned based on the work completed in the class. If the coursework is not completed after a calendar year, the incomplete becomes permanent. Repeating a class in which an incomplete is awarded will not replace the “I” on the student’s transcript.

Voluntary Withdrawal from a Graduate Degree or Certificate Program

Students who wish to transition from one graduate program to another graduate program should complete and submit a Voluntary Withdrawal form. Students should not take this action until they have been admitted to the other graduate degree program.

Other Types of Withdrawal

There are appropriate circumstances when students may need to withdraw from the university (i.e., medical withdrawal, compassionate leave). The policies for such withdrawals are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students. Types of withdrawals and procedures can be found at: students.asu.edu/drop-add. For course withdrawals contact the University Registrar’s Office.

Academic Dismissals by the Graduate College

Students who do not comply with Graduate College policies may be withdrawn from their graduate program after review by the Dean of the Graduate College. In addition, academic units may recommend withdrawal of students from graduate programs for lack of compliance with published departmental policies or lack of satisfactory academic progress. All such recommendations must be submitted to the Graduate College with appropriate documentation (e.g., nature of issue, communications with student). Only the Dean of the Graduate College may withdraw students from a graduate program due to lack of compliance with satisfactory academic progress policies. Students who have been withdrawn from a graduate program due to lack of compliance with published departmental or Graduate College policies, or lack of satisfactory academic progress are eligible to apply for admission to the same program only after one year has passed from the term of the withdrawal. Students who have been withdrawn from a graduate program due to an Academic Integrity violation are not eligible for readmission to Arizona State University.
Graduation Ceremonies

Students can participate in graduation ceremonies if all degree requirements are met prior to the ceremony. Students who need an extra semester to complete coursework must defer their graduation to the next term but can participate in the May or December ceremony (i.e. a summer graduate would apply for summer graduation and can choose to walk in May or December).

Student Appeals

The Masters in Genetic Counseling Program follows the ASU Policy for student appeal procedures, as outlined in the General Catalog. The procedure involves an informal process followed if needed by a formal one. If a student has a concern about the program meeting the standards of the Council of Academic Accreditation, they should contact the CAA office to obtain a copy of their complaint procedures, or refer to the Procedures for Complaints against Graduate Education Programs on ACGC’s website.

Student Grievance Procedures

The grade appeal process is determined based on if the grievance is grade or non-grade related. The appeal process can be found here.

- **Grade related appeals** should first begin by having a discussion with the instructor in question. If the issue remains unresolved the student may submit an appeal to the Program Director for their respective degree program. If the issue remains unresolved the student may then appeal to the Executive Director of Student Success.
- **Non-grade related appeals** should begin with a discussion between the student and instructor. If the matter remains unresolved the student may then petition their case to the Executive Director of Student Success.
- Please email CHSGrad@asu.edu or call 602-496-3300 if you have any questions.

Complaints about the graduate program in Genetic Counseling also may be addressed in writing to: Ms. Reese Teasley, CGMS; Executive Director; Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling; 7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 300; McLean, VA 22102
Phone: (703) 506-2892 Email: info@gceducation.org

The information regarding how complaints are reported and handled can be found on the ACGC website.
**Summary of Program Requirements and Graduation Check-Out**

**Program Requirements**

1. 50 credits of academic coursework. Academic courses counted toward degree credit hour requirements must be completed in the Genetic Counseling Program in the College of Health Solutions.

2. 15 credits of Fieldwork Participatory Experience while under the supervision of an experienced ABGC/ABMGG/CAGC certified genetic counselor.

3. Documentation that you participated in a minimum of 50 participatory cases with individuals who are being evaluated in the specialty areas of prenatal, pediatric, cancer and other adult conditions, with no one specialty domination. 40 of these required 50 cases must involve individuals who are non-simulated clients and not a research participant. All 50 cases must be under the supervision of an experienced ABGC/ABMGG/CAGC certified genetic counselor.

4. 6 credits of thesis (GCO 599) or applied project (GCO 593)

5. If student selects the thesis option, successful completion and successful defense of the thesis.

**Graduation Check-Out Procedures: Program Level**

This summary of check-out procedures applies only at the Program level. Please consult the Graduate College guidelines for additional procedures applied at the University level.

1. After successfully defending your thesis, work with your thesis advisor and your faculty advisor to ensure that your thesis credit is marked as a “satisfactory”.

2. Make sure all final evaluations in Typhon have been submitted and that all log cases have been approved by your clinical supervisors. Double check that each semester of clinic has a final evaluation and that your patient log has been correctly recorded.

3. When the Program Director has verified that all program requirements have been met, she will sign the necessary requirements in student’s iPOS which indicates student has completed requirements for graduation.
Faculty

The following list is for Faculty directly associated with the M.S in Genetic Counseling Program. Please note that there are many other faculty in the College of Health Solutions and from clinical sites across Phoenix who are also involved in aspects of the program.

Clinical Faculty

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