Student Handbook

Class of 2026

Master of Science in

Genetic Counseling Program

Perelman
School of Medicine
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

This handbook is a guide to provide you with information about the MSGC Program, PSOM, and University policies and procedures. Updates to the student handbook are typically completed annually, but there may be instances where updates are required during the academic year. We recommend checking with the MSGC program leadership to confirm policies and requirements. In general, newly updated or implemented policies are effective immediately and apply to all enrolled students. In some cases, new policies apply only to those who matriculate after the new policy or policy update.

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Program Leadership

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Program Mission

The mission of the University of Pennsylvania Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program is to maximize the resources and clinical expertise of a renowned academic, research oriented medical school to prepare the next generation of genetic counseling clinical scholars to help shape the future of genetic counseling and genomic medicine.

Program Vision

To be the premier scholarly and experiential educational program that prepares genetic counseling students to become leaders who will advance patient care in the field of genetics and genomics.

Core Values

- The University of Pennsylvania Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Program (UPMSGC) values the ideals of personal responsibility, integrity and professionalism.
- We expect our students, faculty and staff to meet the highest academic, social and professional standards.
- We believe in a team-based and personalized approach to learning.
- We seek opportunities to provide the most current education for our students in the evolving field of genetics.
- We prepare students to grow and adapt as the field of genetics evolves.
- We believe that advanced education is paramount to the future of the genetic counseling profession.

Philosophy

The philosophy of the UPMSGC is based on the acceptance of the worth of all people. We believe that everyone has the right to effective health care and that services provided by genetic counselors occupy a necessary and unique role in the provision of total health care. Inherent in this belief is the recognition that individuals should be empowered to make informed choices about genetic testing and services free from coercion. We believe that professional education should contribute to the ongoing development of intellect and character, and so the genetic counseling faculty is dedicated to providing an environment that fosters not only excellence in clinical skills and academic performance, but also growth in human values, effective interpersonal relations, professionalism, and leadership. Faculty members, instructors and lecturers are content experts who use sound educational methodologies ranging from integrated didactic, clinical learning and research to enhance independent learning to advance students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes as they apply to clinical practice. The overall educational process is facilitated by dynamic interactions among faculty, lecturers, and students, with the goal that students graduate highly skilled in critical thinking and problem solving, competencies that presume mastery of genetic counseling content and associated counseling skills.

Goals

To achieve the mission of the Program, faculty, staff, and students shall:

1. Demonstrate clinical reasoning to provide genetic counseling based on best evidence
2. Demonstrate a broad range of knowledge in genetic conditions and testing
3. Demonstrate effective communication skills for a variety of contexts
4. Exhibit ethical and professional behavior
5. Engage in ongoing, focused scholarship
6. Promote respect for and participate in inter-professional collaborations
7. Disseminate new and existing knowledge through a variety of mechanisms
8. Exhibit exemplary leadership in the profession and society
9. Engage professionally in diverse cultures and communities to identify health care needs and improve global health and wellness

Administrative Structure

The institutional governance and oversight of the MSGC Program resides in the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) Office of Master's and Certificate Programs (MaC) (https://www.med.upenn.edu/psom/masters.html). Academically, the program sits in the Department of Genetics.
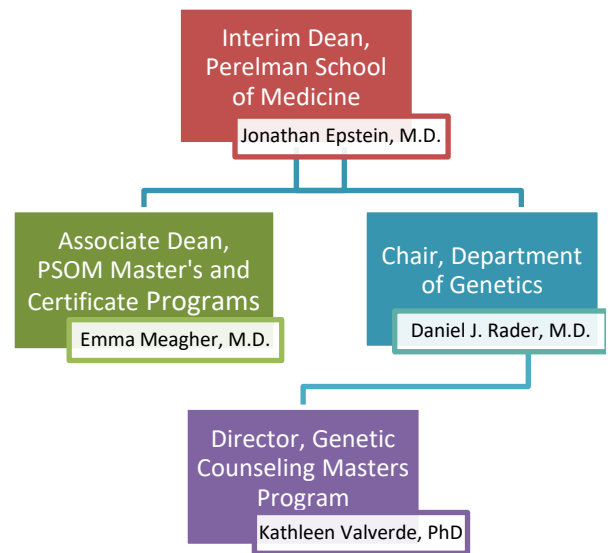
The Office of Master's and Certificate Programs (Mac)

MaC provides institutional support for the Master's and Certificate programs in the Perelman School of Medicine. They lobby for financial support and services, assist with the day to day needs of the programs, and often serve as a connection between the programs and other parts of the university. They sponsor an annual Colloquium to highlight master's student research. They also maintain a website with links to helpful student resources at https://www.med.upenn.edu/maccentral/.

Interim Dean, Perelman School of Medicine — Jonathan Epstein, M.D.

Associate Dean, PSOM Master's and Certificate Programs — Emma Meagher, M.D.

Chair, Department of Genetics — Daniel J. Rader, M.D.

Director, Genetic Counseling Masters Program — Kathleen Valverde, PhD

Working Committees

The Program Leadership is supported by an **Advisory Committee** made up of members from the Penn and CHOP community as well as experts in the field from outside institutions. This Committee meets at least once each year and offers guidance regarding major program challenges and opportunities.

An additional **network of working committees** meets more frequently to focus on specific areas of graduate education. Each committee is co-chaired by Penn and CHOP genetic counselors. Committees include

- **Admissions Committee**
- **Clinical Education Committee**
- **Curriculum Committee**
- **Mentorship Committee**
- **Research Committee**

A full listing of current committee members and the duties of each committee can be found on the program website at https://www.med.upenn.edu/geneticcounseling/who-we-are.html#personnel-description29.

Policies

Non-Discrimination Statement

The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices. Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Sansom Place East, 3600 Chestnut Street, Suite 228, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6106; or (215) 898-6993 (Voice) or (215) 898-7803 (TDD).

University of Pennsylvania Nondiscrimination Statement
https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/nondiscrimination-statement/

Bias Incident Reporting Form
https://diversity.upenn.edu/diversity-at-penn/bias-motivated-incident-report

Title VI, Title IX, and the Rehabilitation Act

Federal law requires the University to designate an employee to coordinate its compliance, including the investigation of complaints with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, the University is required to have procedures for the resolution of student and employee grievances alleging violations of these laws.

Any student in the University who feels that he or she has been discriminated against by an individual or office acting for the University or that the University is not complying with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, or the Rehabilitation Act, has a right to register a complaint and seek redress of his or her grievance. The student may take his/her complaint to the following University office:

Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs

The Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs monitors the University's equal opportunity/affirmative action policies and programs. The office also is responsible for coordinating complaints with non-discrimination laws (including investigating complaints and coordinating programs for the disabled). The OAA staff is available to consult with faculty, staff, students, and members of the community who have questions or concerns regarding the application or possible violation of these policies, Title VI or Title IX. The office is located at 3600 Chestnut Street; Sansom Place East, Suite 228; Philadelphia, PA 19104. The phone number is 215-898-6993.

In addition, the Office of Affirmative Action is responsible for coordinating complaints with non-discrimination laws, including investigating complaints and coordinating programs for the disabled. The OAA staff is available to consult with faculty, staff, students, and members of the community who have questions or concerns regarding the application or possible violation of these policies, Title VI or Title IX.

Student Confidentiality

The educational records of students are protected according to the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), the Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Information on student academic performance will be kept in confidence by instructors and program leadership unless students give permission for others to be included. If an instructor believes that information should be shared beyond program leadership, the instructor should inform the student(s) and either ask for permission to share the information or advise the student to discuss the issue with the other individuals.

Pennbook Policies

The **Pennbook** (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook) is a collection of policies that relate to student life at the University of Pennsylvania. These policies govern academic activities such as grading and exams, provide guidance on the use of campus resources, and explain expectations for membership in the university community.

The two most important policies in the Pennbook are the Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Academic Integrity. These two policies outline the general responsibilities of being a student at Penn. All students are expected to have read and understood both policies before coming to campus. Students must comply with the University's Code of Student Conduct and other University policies related to student conduct that appear in the Pennbook: https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/

Any student who exhibits unprofessional behavior as determined by program leadership will be evaluated for probation. Continued unprofessional behavior will be grounds for removal from the program.

Academic Integrity

Code of Academic Integrity: (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/)

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the University's Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic Dishonesty Definitions: (https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/)

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to the following definitions:

- Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations

or other academic work or preventing, or attempting to prevent, another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. Example: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam, altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, using AI composition software (like ChatGPT) to generate content for assignments, etc.

- Plagiarism: using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.

- Fabrication: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data for an experiment, fudging data, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.

- Multiple submission: submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.

- Misrepresentation of academic records: misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University of Pennsylvania. Example: forging a change of grade slip, tampering with computer records, falsifying academic information on one's resume, etc.

- Facilitating academic dishonesty: knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of the Code. Example: working together on a take-home exam, etc.

- Unfair advantage: attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Examples: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials, obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise, lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper, continuing to write even when time is up during an exam, destroying or keeping library materials for one's own use, etc.

* If a student is unsure whether their action(s) constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, then it is that student's responsibility to consult with the instructor to clarify any ambiguities.

Any student who exhibits unprofessional behavior as determined by program leadership will be evaluated for probation. Continued unprofessional behavior will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Code of Student Conduct

https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-student-conduct/

Students in the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania are accountable to comply with the **Biomedical Graduate Studies (BGS) policies,** adopted by the office of Master's and Certificate Programs at the Perelman School of Medicine, for both general and academic conduct. These policies can be found at https://www.med.upenn.edu/bgs/expectations-of-students.html.

Accepting membership into the University of Pennsylvania community as a student entails an obligation to promote its welfare by assuming the rights and responsibilities listed in the full document at the email address above. Each individual member of this community is responsible for their own actions and is expected to respect the rights of others.

Sexual Misconduct Policy, Resource Offices and Complaint Procedures

All details of policies and procedures related to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence and Stalking Policy; Consensual Romantic and Sexual Relationships in the Workplace and Educational Settings Policy; Student Disciplinary Procedures for Resolving Complaints of Sexual Misconduct; Procedures for Resolving Complaints of Sexual Misconduct Against Faculty; and Procedures for Resolving Complaints of Sexual Misconduct Against Staff can be found in the Pennbook at https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/.

NSGC Code of Ethics

We strive to understand and adhere to the values of the NSGC Code of Ethics. A copy is included in the appendix, and you can view it on the NSGC website at https://www.nsgc.org/POLICY/Code-of-Ethics-Conflict-of-Interest/Code-of-Ethics.

A Professional Master's Program

What does it mean to be in a Professional Master's Program?

The MSGC is a professional degree that is legally required before you can apply for a license or become certified as a genetic counselor. Components of the degree, like clinical rotations and research, help you to build your resume along the way and provide a kind of on-the job training that prepares you to immediately enter the field upon graduation. Because of that, even as a student, you are a part of the genetic counseling field.

Being part of a healthcare profession comes with expectations built around providing the highest quality patient care. As a professional student, you are expected to meet those standards, including:

- putting the patient first
- having high ethical standards
- cooperating with and respecting all members of the healthcare team
- communicating clearly and responding promptly
- being on time
- maintaining clear and accurate documentation
- doing your best work and being accountable for it

Remember too that during your time in the program you may be meeting future employers and people that you hope will write letters of recommendation for you someday. Help them see you as a professional genetic counselor as you learn with them.

Writing Professional Emails

Email is the recommended communication method, and you will be writing to instructors, professors, physicians, thesis advisors, clinical supervisors and ultimately potential employers during your time in the MSGC program. Making a good impression is very important. Here are some guidelines for success.

1. Check your PennMedicine email address at least once a day.

2. Respond to email messages within 24 hours on business days

3. Writing effective professional emails

    When you are reaching out to others, you are representing yourself and the MSGC program. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you craft an email message.

    - Be professional, formal and respectful. Address program leadership, instructors, clinical supervisors as *Dear Professor X*, *Dr. Y*, or *Ms. Z.*
    - Provide a brief, pertinent description in the subject line that indicates why you are writing
    - Be collegial – use an opening line
    - Be concise. Say what you need to say directly in clear language. Use complete sentences, not text message talk.
    - Be cautious with your tone. Without the accompanying facial and verbal cues of conversation, written words are more open to misinterpretation.
    - Proofread your emails before sending

U Penn Services and Resources

For more detailed information about these student resources, visit the program webpage at https://www.med.upenn.edu/geneticcounseling/student-resources.html.

Biotech Commons

Johnson Pavilion
36th & Hamilton Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-898-5815

Website: https://www.library.upenn.edu/biotech-commons – from here you can reserve a book, reserve a study room, schedule a consultation with a research librarian

For more about the library's services: https://guides.library.upenn.edu/about-biotech-commons

This is a newly renovated and comfortable place to study on your own or in groups. The reference librarians are available to help with literature searches and more.

Career Services

McNeil Building Suite 20
3718 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 898-7531
Email: careerservices@vpul.upenn.edu

Website: http://www.upenn.edu/careerservices

Resume review. Practice interviews. Salary Negotiation. Career resources. Alumni networking.
Free Professional Headshots in the Career Services Photo Booth: Open during normal Career Services business hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm), the booth is a self-serve experience. Take up to three photos and edit your favorite, all using the touch screen device in the booth or by scanning a QR code with your smartphone! Photos are then delivered by email.

Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA)
http://gapsa.upenn.edu/

1. GAPSA members engage in an ongoing dialogue with the leaders of the University, sit on Board of Trustees and University Council meetings, and meet regularly with Penn's President and Provost to advocate for student interests.

2. GAPSA is responsible for funding graduate school governments, student groups, student-led initiatives, and individual student grants.

3. GAPSA organizes and funds events for graduate students

4. GAPSA provides Resources and support for students by identity:

   - Indigenous students
   - Students with disabilities
   - Black students
   - Latinx students
   - Asian students
   - LGBTQ+ students
   - Women

Graduate Student Center

3615 Locust Walk
Phone: 215.746.6868
http://www.upenn.edu/gsc/

This newly renovated space has welcoming areas to hang out, free tea and coffee, resources for new students and continuing students, a massive events calendar, and the ability to help you navigate Penn and connect you with resources all across the campus.

The Graduate Resource Guide (https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources) includes links for graduate orientation, new student resources, living in Philadelphia and much more.

Student Registration & Financial Services (SRFS)

SRFS Student Service Center
100 Franklin Building
3451 Walnut Street
Phone: 215.898.1988
https://srfs.upenn.edu

SRFS manages student accounts, including billing and financial aid and loans. The SRFS Student Service accepts drop ins, but you can also connect by phone or through their recently updated website.
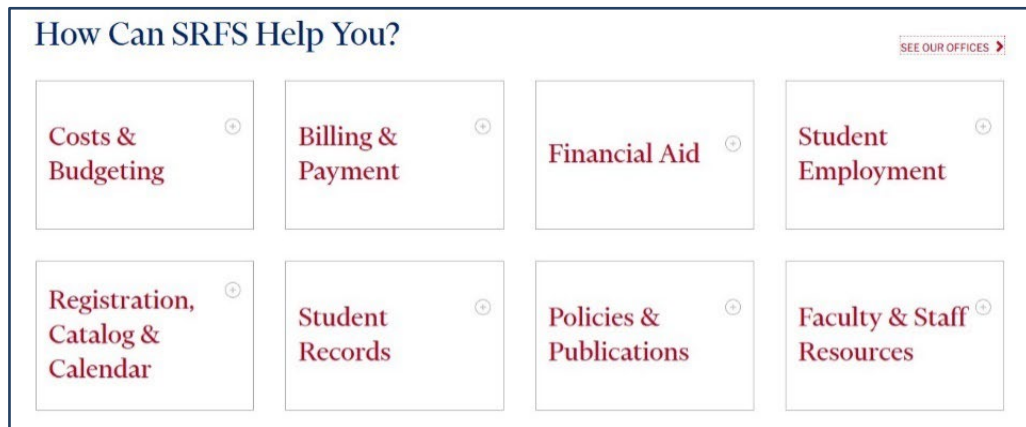
In a newly renovated space, this One-Stop Shop is the place to go for help with:

- financial aid (learning about, applying for and managing student loans)
  - Graduate financial aid counselors: https://srfs.upenn.edu/financial-aid/graduate-counseling
  - For questions regarding federal or private loans or general financial aid information please contact graduateaid@pobox.upenn.edu. This email is staffed by counselors who work exclusively with graduate students.
  - FAQ page: https://srfs.upenn.edu/financial-aid/loans/graduate-faq
- billing schedules, payments, and account balances
- student employment
- student records
- tax questions related to financial aid, scholarships and student employment

Wellness at Penn

https://wellness.upenn.edu/student-health-and-counseling

Our vision is simple: we want to create a campus experience that integrates the science, theory, and practice of wellness. We will accomplish this by infusing wellness across its eight domains throughout the Penn experience through inclusive, innovative, and impactful initiatives.

The newly re-organized center is built upon two pillars (Student Health and Counseling and Public Health and Wellbeing) that operate collaboratively to create a campus community centered on wellness. Some of their services are discussed in the insurance and clinical clearance sections later in the handbook, but you can review the whole array of them at https://wellness.upenn.edu/student-health-and-counseling.

Mental Health and Counseling Resources

Wellness at Penn has provided these contact numbers for members of the Penn community who are seeking time sensitive help in navigating Penn's resources for health and wellness.

If you are experiencing an emergency, you should refer to the following resources for assistance:

Student Health and Counseling (24/7):
(Urgent medical or mental health needs)
Medical Care: 215-746-3535; 3535 Market Street, Suite 100
Counseling: 215-898-7021; 3624 Market Street, First Floor West

The Help Line (24/7):
(Help navigating Penn's health and wellness resources)
215-898-HELP (4357)

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call PennComm (24/7) at 215-573-3333. Dial 911 if outside of the Penn patrol zone.

If you are experiencing a suicidal crisis or are in emotional distress, contact the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (24/7) dial 988 or chat with a national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline support person(link is external)(link is external). You can also text HOME to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor (24/7).

Weingarten Center

Stouffer Commons
3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300
215-573-9235
https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/

- **Learning Resources Center**

  Provides professional instruction in university-relevant skills such as academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. Also help with test taking strategies and more.

  Learning Consultations *offer opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to build and strengthen their study skills and strategies as they engage with Penn coursework and a variety of academic projects. Our learning specialists support you by addressing time and project management, organization, academic reading, research and writing, problem-solving, and exam preparation.*

  Learning Consultations by Appointment: You can schedule 50-minute virtual or in-person meetings to discuss your study strategies and approaches to a variety of academic assignments and assessments. Access MyWeingartenCenter to schedule a Learning Consultation. If you select a virtual consultation, you will receive a Zoom meeting link in the appointment confirmation email.
  https://wlrc.vpul.upenn.edu/learning-consultations/

  Study Tools and Strategies offer online resources including test taking and scheduling modules to support academic success. https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/academic-support/study-tools-and-strategies/

- **Office of Student Disability Services**

  Provides services for students who self-identify with a disability in order to ensure equal access to all University programs, activities, and services.

  Through this office students can register for services, learn about required documentation, and request accommodations for long-term and temporary (broken bones, concussion) conditions that impact learning. Students can also request referrals for educational evaluations.

  Students are strongly advised to register with Disability Services upon matriculation into the University; it can take up to four weeks to review documentation and approve accommodations.

  The Weingarten Center informs instructors directly if a student registered in their courses has an academic accommodation. Students may also want to inform program leadership about their accommodation so program leadership can advocate for them and, if needed, help navigate available resources.
  The website is https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/disability-services/ and the direct phone number is 267-788-0030.

University of Pennsylvania Systems

AirPennNet, the UPenn Wi-Fi network

AirPennNet is the University's campus-wide wireless network, permitting secure and convenient network access in campus buildings and residence halls. Here is a helpful link with instructions for connecting to AirPennNet: https://www.isc.upenn.edu/how-to/using-wireless-penn.

For **IT help:** call 215-573-INFO or s**ubmit a HelpDesk ticket** using the following link: https://helpdesk.pmacs.upenn.edu/

Blue Course Evaluation System

Master's programs at the Perelman School of Medicine use a course evaluation system called **Blue** to evaluate courses, course directors and coordinators, and individual lecturers.

It is important to be aware that these evaluations are linked directly to faculty files for promotion review and are not the place to air grievances or to bring up questions or critiques that could have been addressed to the course coordinator/director, through the program's ombuds system or to the program director during the semester.

Student complete three sets of Blue evaluations during the semester.

- At each semester mid-point students receive an email with a link connecting them to the online evaluation forms for each course they are taking. The mid-semester evaluations request feedback on **individual lectures** for the first half of the semester.

- At the end of the semester, students also receive an email with links for the online evaluation forms , but now they will complete two for each course, one with feedback on lectures given in the last half of the semester and one that evaluates the **course director(s) and course overall**.

This feedback is essential to the program's accreditation and ability to continue to improve the coursework. **Students are required to complete all evaluations.** Grades and transcripts can be withheld for noncompliance.

Path@Penn

Path@Penn provides secure web access to view

- current billing information

- course registration and schedules

- academic records

- your transcript (you can view your unofficial transcript at any time (even as an alumni. You can request an official transcript at https://srfs.upenn.edu/student-records/transcripts/current-students-2010-present.

- student health insurance

- your student profile and contact information

Access to this site requires login with PennKey and password: https://srfs.upenn.edu/path-at-penn. It's a user-friendly system with extensive support links on the website.

Still have questions? Visit the Student Registration and Financial Services office or contact pathatpenn@pobox.upenn.edu or 215-898-1988 for help.

Updating your contact information in Path@Penn

Path@Penn is also where you will go to **update your required contact information**. The Registrar's office requires regular updating, and if you have missing or outdated information you may be placed on registration and/or graduation hold.

You can find the directions to check and update your information at https://srfs.upenn.edu/student-records/update-your-student-data/update-required-contact-information.

There are four pieces of information that are essential:

1. A UPennAlert Student Mobile Phone Number (how they should contact you in a campus emergency

2. Your emergency or Missing Person Contact information

3. Your "Learning From Address" (usually your campus/Philly address)

4. Your Permanent Address (where they can find you after you graduate. Even if you aren't going to live there, someone at that address would know how to find you.)

   ★ Even if your local and permanent addresses are the same, they must be entered in both places.

   ★ If you can leave the "end date" (how long you will be at an address or using a phone number) blank, you should. You'll have one less thing to update.

PennCard

PennCard is the official identification card of UPenn and is required for all students. The PennCard is a physical ID card. You should keep it with you at all times when you are on campus. It allows you to access the library, the gym, and other campus buildings. You can also show it to get discounts around the campus and city.

The PennCard Center is located on the second floor of the Penn Bookstore at 3601 Walnut Street. Visit their website for directions to get your PennCard: http://www.upenn.edu/penncard.

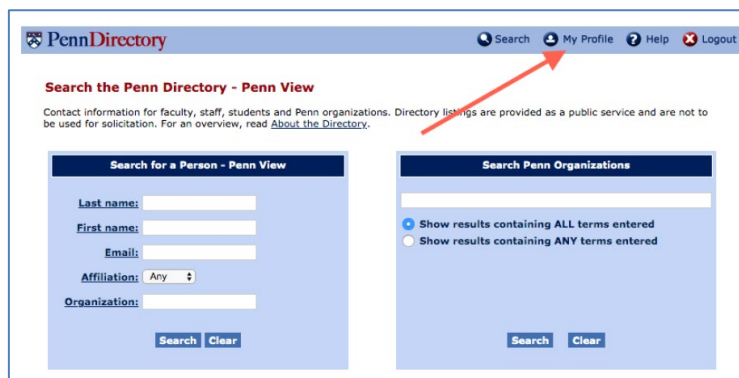The office can be reached at penncard@upenn.edu and 215.417.CARD (2273).

 Lost or Stolen Cards must be reported immediately.

Penn Directory

You should check periodically to make sure your contact information—especially your email address—is up to date in the Penn Directory. This is where the University will send all official communications, including essential information about bills, loans, and refunds.

Use an email address that you check regularly, to ensure you do not miss anything important. (Note: you can use a personal address.) Remember to update this information if it changes.

1. Login to the Penn Directory with your PennKey and password. (You can access it from the U@Penn portal. It will be on the upper right of the page.)

2. Click "My Profile" in the upper right.

3. Agree to the Terms and Conditions.

4. This will bring you to a page where you can edit your contact information, including your email address.

Penn Email

Penn uses Outlook for email. It is important to use your PennMedicine email for all program and University correspondence and to check it regularly so that you do not miss important communication from the University, program, clinical supervisors, and research mentors.

If you want to, you can forward emails from this account to a preferred email account.

You will lose access to this account around the time of graduation, so be aware that you will need to save important contacts and information elsewhere.

★Email is not considered secure for sharing any patient information.
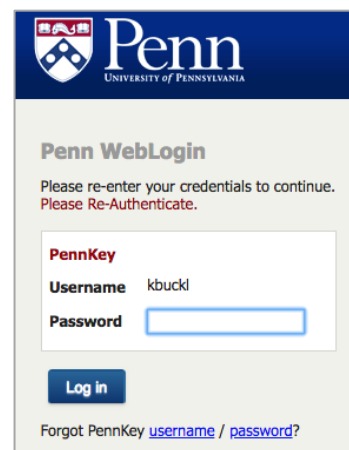
PennKey

Your PennKey is your digital ID at the University of Pennsylvania. Penn assigns your ID number, but you choose your PennKey, usually using all or part of your name (moirarose or smithb27, for example). FYI: Other people can see it and will need it for various reasons, so keep that in mind.

You will use your PennKey username and a password that you create to sign into practically everything – courses on Canvas, electronic library resources, student health records, student accounts, AirPennNet, and other online Penn systems. Keep your password secure, and do not share it with others.

Other helpful PennKey information is available at: https://pennkeysupport.upenn.edu/about

The Penn Portal – U@Penn

The Penn Portal bundles together links to important information for students. Access the Penn Portal at https://uatpenn.apps.upenn.edu/penn_portal/u%40penn.php. .

Through U@Penn you can access many Penn resources. You'll use your PennKey and password to log in.

- **Path@Penn** – the application you will use to see your schedule, academic history, financial aid, transcript and more
- **Penn+Box** – Penn's version of DropBox for secure file sharing
- **Libraries**
- **Directories**
- **Listings of** Penn events, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and other news
- **Workday Learning** – for training that is assigned by the program or University. Also a resource for self-selected training on many topics.

Commonly Used Applications

Canvas

Canvas is the University's learning management system. Canvas is known for its user-friendly online environment and ability to easily connect instructors and students both in and out of the classroom.

Individual Canvas courses are set up for each academic course you are enrolled in, and you are automatically added to the "Canvas course," which you can access with PennKey and password. With Canvas, instructors can make announcements, share documents, provide links to textbooks and readings, administer online tests, assign grades, and more. Students can access syllabi, link to required readings, submit assignments, and more. Most textbooks, chapters, and articles used in GENC courses will be available electronically through Canvas.

The program sends weekly "Friday Updates" through a Canvas Community, which it also uses to share information on special events like conferences and speakers, advocacy opportunities, and job listings.

★ You can set up notifications in Canvas to alert you when something is added to a course, so you don't miss important news.

Log in at https://canvas.upenn.edu
Support: canvas@pobox.upenn.edu

The Canvas at Penn site offers student resources at: https://infocanvas.upenn.edu/guides/canvas-for-students/

Penn+Box

Penn+Box, Penn's version of DropBox, is a cloud-based collaboration service for securely managing and sharing files and folders within the Penn community and externally. Users can access, create, manage, and distribute content across various device types and operating systems. Penn+Box also ensures that University data and intellectual property are securely protected.

University of Pennsylvania has provided active faculty, students, and staff with a Penn+Box account with space to store, share, and access files online.

First time users, please visit the Getting Started guide.

Returning users can access their account at https://upenn.account.box.com/login. Local credentials may be required for use with some mobile devices or third-party applications. To use a local password, look below the text "Not part of University of Pennsylvania?" and select the link for Log in using Box credentials. See the FAQ for more information.

★ To invite collaborators with Penn Medicine email addresses to view or share files, use their **[pennkey]@upenn.edu** assigned Penn+Box account names, i.e., jomack3@upenn.edu, not their PennMedicine email addresses. The system should send an email to their actual email address letting them know that the invitation is there, but even if they do not receive the invitation via email, they will be able to log in to Penn+Box and see the shared files.

To invite collaborators outside the Penn system, use their regular email addresses to share files.

You can set up notifications in your profile to email you and alert when something is added or changed.

Workday Learning (formerly KnowledgeLink)

Workday Learning is a collection of training modules. It includes training that is assigned by the University or the MSGC program but is also a resource for self-selected training in a variety of areas.

To view other available trainings that may be helpful, click on Workday Learning under Career Resources in the U@Penn portal.

Select "Learning Home" to see assigned training and learning history and as well as to search for additional courses.

Browse Learning Content
Search by title, course number or using filters to find the course you wish to enroll.
Browse Learning Content →
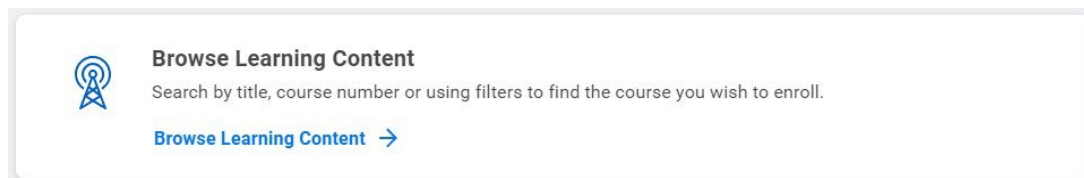
Browse Learning Content is the gateway to nearly 11,000 courses, nearly all available on demand. Search by key word(s) and many other criteria.

Zoom

The University of Pennsylvania has signed an enterprise agreement with Zoom, which provides Zoom licenses for all PSOM faculty, staff and students. Zoom provides an easy-to-use video conferencing platform that is available at no cost. Zoom can be used to host education, research, and administrative meetings. Zoom cannot be used for telemedicine / telehealth visits.

It is important **to set up a new Zoom account** through the University of Pennsylvania even if you have a personal zoom account. The accounts through Penn have different settings, including the ability to host longer meetings. For step-by-step instructions, go to: https://www.med.upenn.edu/pmacs/zoomaccountsetup.html.

★ When setting up an account, logging in to Zoom, or inviting people to join your meeting, you may need to enter Penn Medicine email addresses as pennkey@upenn.edu (not the actual PennMedicine email address). If you search and the email address you need comes up as an option, you can use that.

For more information on Zoom including FAQs, visit https://www.med.upenn.edu/pmacs/zoom/.

For help with Zoom, please contact medhelp@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.

Health & Vaccination Requirements

Health Records

Wellness at Penn
3535 Market Street (36th and Market)
Suite 100 (floor 1)
Philadelphia, PA 19104
https://wellness.upenn.edu/

Wellness at Penn houses confidential student **health records** and is available for appointments and referrals. Incoming students must submit a physical form prior to the start of classes. This and other forms are available on the website at https://wellness.upenn.edu/immunization-insurance-requirements/new-and-incoming-students. Completed forms and vaccination records are uploaded directly through a portal on the Wellness website

Medical Care	Call 215-746-3535 for information, support, to schedule an appointment, and to speak with an on-call provider. 3535 Market Street, Suite 100
Counseling	Call 215-898-7021 for information, support, to schedule an appointment, and to speak with an on-call provider. 3624 Market Street, First Floor West

Immunization and Insurance Questions	215-746-4200 wel-immun@pobox.upenn.edu wel-shsinsur@pobox.upenn.edu 3535 Market street, Suite 20, Mezzanine

Vaccination Requirements and Documentation

Incoming students are required to meet the immunization requirements for Penn's healthcare professional students at the Perelman School of Medicine. Vaccination for COVID-19 and an annual flu vaccine are both required. A COVID-19 booster is recommended. The required form includes a full list of the immunization requirements and can be found at https://upenn.app.box.com/s/mbpdror6zltg6pd8hq9hspkl22k1y85p.

In addition, genetic counseling students are required to have a minimum of one PPD test yearly for participation in the clinical experiences. This test is offered for a fee at Student Health Services. In the event of a positive test, subsequent testing or medical documentation will be necessary before entering a clinical experience.

All clinical sites require documentation of a seasonal flu vaccine in order to attend clinic during the months of October through March. Student Health can administer the flu vaccine, and Penn holds several flu shot clinics early in the fall.

Some clinical sites require additional physical exams, immunizations, or titers. These services can be obtained from a private medical caregiver, but they are also available at Student Health Services. The Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP) covers the cost of all vaccines required by the University or the program. For students not on PSIP, the vaccine cost will be billed to their bursar account, and they may then submit it for reimbursement to their insurance carrier.

Health Insurance

Like all universities, Penn requires that all full-time students have and provide documentation of comprehensive health insurance. The Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP) is available for students who do not have insurance, whose plans do not provide coverage in the Philadelphia area, or whose plans do not meet the criteria for alternative insurance. In addition to health insurance, students have the option of adding dental and vision coverage.

Full-time students (3 CU or more) are required to pay a separate Clinical Fee for access to the Student Health Service. All students must enroll in a private health insurance plan that provides an equivalent capitated payment to the Student Health Service (i.e., the Penn Student Insurance Plan or a private plan that provides an equivalent capitated payment).

Full-time students must either enroll into or waive out of the Penn Student Insurance Plan each year. (Students who take three or more CU in a semester are considered full-time.) This is done online annually through the Penn Insurance Portal between July 1 and August 31.

- Details on the insurance plan can be found at https://wellness.upenn.edu/immunization-insurance-compliance/insurance-compliance

- Students who do not request an online waiver by the deadline (typically August 31) will be enrolled in PSIP and will be billed for coverage in early September.

Tuition, Fees, and Billing

Student Registration & Financial Services (SRFS) manages student accounts, including billing and financial aid and student loans. The **SRFS Student Service Center** is located in the lobby of the Franklin Building at 3451 Walnut Street. You can drop in or contact the Center at 215.898.1988 or through their website at https://srfs.upenn.edu/.

Program Costs

Students at UPenn are billed per course unit, or CU. Core courses are one CU. You will complete a total of 14 CU to earn the MSGC degree. For the 2024-25 academic year, the cost per CU, including tuition and the mandatory clinical, general and technology fees, is $5,828. At that rate, tuition and fees for the entire degree will cost $83,612. The University typically increases tuition and fees 2-4% per year, so the actual total will be slightly higher.

Current information on tuition and fees for the MSGC program can be found at https://srfs.upenn.edu/costs-budgeting/med/masters.

Description of Fees

General Fee: A General Fee is assessed to all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, and directly funds Penn's non-instructional student support services.

Technology Fee: The Technology Fee covers technology-driven services, including library electronic research tools, course portals, and use of email accounts.

Clinical Fee: Full-time students (enrolled in more than two CU in a term) are required to

1. pay a separate Clinical Fee for access to the Student Health Service, or

2. enroll in a health insurance plan that provides a capitated payment to the Student Health Service (i.e., the Penn Student Insurance Plan or a private plan that provides an equivalent capitated payment).

   A review of the Penn Student Insurance Plan can be found at the following website: https://wellness.upenn.edu/immunization-insurance-compliance/insurance-compliance

The General Fee and Technology Fee are billed per CU, but only up to three CUs per semester. They do not increase with additional CUs.

Billing Procedures

The Office of Student Registration & Financial Services sends electronic bursar bills to students within 4–6 weeks after course registration has been processed, and amounts billed are due on the date indicated. Additional bills are generated on a monthly schedule throughout the semester, and you will receive a notification to your email address on record in the Penn Directory when a new billing statement is available to view on Penn.Pay. This webpage provides billing dates by semester for the next year.

Once you have set up your Penn.Pay account (see below), you can pay your bill electronically, by mail, in person, or via wire transfer. Billing questions can be addressed to Student Financial Services at 215-898-

1988. Please refer to the Student Financial Services web site at https://srfs.upenn.edu/billing-payment/paying-your-bill.

Bills and other official communications, such as financial aid information, are sent to the email address on record in the Penn Directory. Please be sure that your email address is up to date in the Penn Directory (see Update Directory Listings).

Set Up Your Penn.Pay Billing Account

Penn.Pay is Penn's online tuition billing and payment system. As a student, you can access Penn.Pay by logging in with your PennKey.

Students whose parents or other payers are making payments must invite them to be an 'other payer' on Penn.Pay so that they can both view and pay bills. See https://srfs.upenn.edu/billing-payment/third-party-payment.
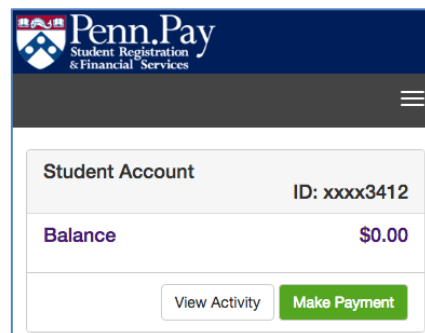
Set up your payment account at:
https://srfs.upenn.edu/billing-payment/pennpay

Failure to Pay

Balances remaining beyond the due date are subject to a late payment penalty of 1.5% per month, which will appear on the next statement. A student could be placed on Financial Hold if bills remain unpaid which will jeopardize continuing enrollment and future registration.

The University reserves the right to withhold registration, transcripts, diplomas and all other information regarding the record of any student who is in arrears in the payment of tuition, fees, or any other charges, including student loans. The enforcement of this policy shall not relieve the student of the obligation to pay any outstanding fees and charges.

See additional financial policies at https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/financial-policies/

Financial Aid

Students may consider seeking funding support from their employers, through tuition benefits or by applying for private and/or federal loans.

MSGC students who are US citizens or permanent residents may be eligible for federal loans during most semesters. **For more information on federal loans,** call the Penn Student Financial Services office at 215-898-1988 to make an advising appointment with a loan officer. Students must be enrolled in at least 2.0 CU in a given semester to be eligible for federal financial aid in that semester.

International students may apply for various private loans, but will usually need a US co-signer to do so. Learn more about financial aid options for international students.

Veterans may be eligible for financial support through the Yellow Ribbon Program.

For more information about financial aid, please contact Penn's Student Financial Services office at 215-898-1988.

Financial Aid and Requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress

https://srfs.upenn.edu/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress

- Federal regulations require that a student must be making satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for assistance from any Federal Title IV student aid program (Federal Pell Grant, Federal SEOG, Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Direct/PLUS Loan, and State Student Incentive Grant Programs). GPA of 3.0 or higher at the end of every term

- The student must be completing credit units at a rate which would enable them to complete the requirements for the degree in a maximum time frame of 150 percent of the published length of the academic program (21 months for the MSGC program x 150% = 31.5 months). The maximum period will depend on whether the student is full-time or half-time.

- The student must successfully complete at least two thirds of courses attempted during their degree program. Marks such as NR, GR, and I do not count as completed coursework.

Assessment of Teaching and Learning

Assessment is essential to examine the capability of our faculty, instructors, curriculum, staff and learning environment to prepare students to enter the profession of genetic counseling. The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), University of Pennsylvania, and the Genetic Counseling Program require documentation to help determine if academic and clinical education experiences prepare the student as an entry-level genetic counselor with the requisite knowledge and skills. The mission of the ACGC is to protect the interests of students and the public by setting standards for genetic counseling education and accrediting graduate programs. Accredited genetic counseling programs demonstrate compliance with standards developed by ACGC. A student who graduates from a non-accredited program cannot sit for the licensure examination and cannot practice as a certified genetic counselor in the United States.

The assessment of compliance in meeting ACGC standards is monitored by collecting measurable outcomes. The program collects information about

- the adequacy of the teaching
- the content offered in classroom and fieldwork experiences
- the quality of instruction and the environment in clinical education experiences
- the didactic curriculum
- student performance in course work and clinical internships
- student performance on the licensure examination
- success in securing employment

Student performance in coursework is measured by the individual instructors. Each instructor establishes their own criteria for evaluation that are clearly delineated in the course syllabus. Students are also asked routinely to provide narrative and objective information to assist in evaluating the courses and instructors. Finally, the program also collects examples of student work and documents student participation in related activities so that external reviewers can assess the program's ability to achieve learning outcomes.

Academic Calendar & Attendance Policy

University of Pennsylvania Academic Calendar

The MSGC program follows the official academic calendar of the University of Pennsylvania for semester start and end dates, breaks, secular holidays, Thanksgiving week, reading days, and finals periods. A three-year academic calendar for the University can be found at https://almanac.upenn.edu/penn-academic-calendar. The program will inform students well in advance if there will be any variations from this schedule.

Class Attendance Policy

Attendance at all classes is required and students are expected to arrive on time.

Students who cannot attend class are expected to contact the instructor before the scheduled class session when possible. If the absence is for more than two days, the student must notify the Program Director who will inform faculty members in a timely fashion, sharing the reason for the absence only if the student has given permission and it is deemed necessary. The preferred method of sharing personal information is in one-on-one discussions or in a closed meeting.

Students who miss a class are expected to watch the recording of the session if it is available and/or to request notes from a classmate if it is not.

Inclement Weather and Class Attendance

In the event of a significant weather event that may result in the early or complete closing of the University of Pennsylvania, please follow the instructions below:

1. If classes are canceled at the University of Pennsylvania due to inclement weather, then students are excused from class and clinic as well.
2. If the University is open, but a student does not feel they can safely make it to campus, they must inform their instructor, who can arrange for them to participate through MediaSite streaming if possible. If not, students may be able to watch the recording later and may need to borrow a classmate's notes.
3. Missed class(es) will be made up via remote instruction or other method at the discretion of the instructor. Clinic days will be made up according to the individual clinics in consultation with the Associate Program Director for Clinical Education.

Missing an Exam

Students are required to notify the instructor before, or on the day of, an exam if illness or accident prevents them from attending an exam. For students with a valid reason for missing the examination, the instructor will reschedule the examination as soon as possible.

University Policy on Secular and Religious Holidays

1. The University recognizes/observes the following secular holidays: Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving and the day after, Labor Day, and New Year's Day.

2. The University recognizes that there are several religious holidays that affect large numbers of University community members, including Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Passover, and Good Friday. In consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given, and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover material introduced in class on that holiday. Faculty and Instructors should be aware that Jewish holidays begin at sundown on the evening before the published date of the holiday. Late afternoon exams should be avoided on these days.

3. The University recognizes that there are other holidays, both religious and secular, which are of importance to some individuals and groups on campus. Such occasions include, but are not limited to, Sukkot, the last two days of Passover, Shavuot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, as well as Chinese New Year, the Muslim New Year, Diwali, Navaratri, Rama Navami, Paryushan, and the Islamic holidays Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. **Students who wish to observe such holidays must inform their instructors within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday** even when the exact date of the holiday will not be known until later so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students, faculty, and instructors can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty and instructors must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations.

For a complete list of holidays for the academic year, see https://chaplain.upenn.edu/worship/holidays/

Academic Progress & Performance

Degree Requirements

Requirements include coursework, first-year internships, clinical internships, learning and advocacy experiences, and a thesis project. These are detailed below:

- Satisfactory completion of required coursework totaling fourteen credit units.

- An overall minimum GPA of 3.0, maintained throughout the program. A grade below "B-" is not acceptable towards the degree.

- Continuous enrollment for four semesters.

- Satisfactory completion of all required fieldwork at approved sites with participation in at least 50 supervised participatory cases and documentation of all cases observed throughout the first and second year of training.

- A research paper (thesis) satisfactorily completed during the second year.

- Satisfactory completion of required non-credit courses, including clinical and professional development activities
- Participation in experiential learning and advocacy components.
  - Students are expected to complete and log into Typhon at least 10 hours of advocacy work in each year of the program.
  - Students are expected to complete and log into Typhon at least 10 hours of teaching in each year of the program.

Student Evaluation

The Handbook includes a broad description of how the program assesses acquisition of the PBCs. Methods of assessment in each individual class are determined by the instructors in consultation with program leadership. Methods can include written exams, oral exams, presentations, papers, role plays and other assignments. This information is provided in the syllabus of each class

Grading

Grading will be on a scale of "A" for excellent to "F" for failure. Letter grades may be modified with a + (plus) or – (minus). The grading system converts letter grades to a GPA on the 4.0 scale. Letter grades may be modified by a plus (+) or minus (-) sign at the discretion of the course director.

Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 throughout the program in order to graduate. Students may attain no lower than a "B-" for courses to count toward the degree. A grade of "C+" or lower must be remediated, pursuant to the policy on Grade Remediation.

An **incomplete** is a notation given in lieu of a letter grade and is designated as "I." A student who fails to complete a course and does not withdraw within the prescribed period shall receive at the instructor's discretion either a grade of "I" (incomplete) or "F" (failure). An "I" indicates the expectation that the student will continue working on assignments for the course but has been unable to complete the coursework assigned within the confines of the course dates. Incompletes are granted with the permission of the instructor and the understanding that the student will complete the work within a stipulated timeframe. The instructor may permit an extension of time up to one year for the completion of the course. In such cases, any course which is still incomplete after one calendar year from its official ending must remain as "incomplete" on the student's record and shall not be credited toward a degree.

Grading Scale	
A+	4.0
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0.00

First and second year internships (GENC 6700 and 6800), Professional Development (GENC 6450) and Grand Rounds (GENC 6500 and 6550) are graded as S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory).

The notation of GR or NR will appear when grades are delayed and will be amended when the grades are submitted.

The UPMSGC program additionally requires that the caliber of the student's work and their conduct in the program be of an appropriate professional quality to ensure advancement. Failure to meet these requirements may result in a student being placed on probation and/or require a student to withdraw despite a satisfactory grade average.

Academic Standing

The UPMSGC program has specific academic standards that are expected of all students. Students are encouraged to communicate and meet regularly with the Program Director to discuss academic progress. All students must receive a B- or better in each of the courses required for the MSGC degree, while maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0 or above. Students may be placed on probation if they receive a grade lower than B- in a required course.

If a student fails to obtain a passing grade in a required course, they will be placed on academic probation. Students will be notified of their probation status through written communication. The Program Director will work with the student and Course Director to develop a plan for remediation and for academic success. Students may continue to enroll in other courses while on probation with the permission of the Program Director and input from the course director, as needed.

Time to Degree

The MSGC degree program is structured for completion in 21 months. Students may request an alternative plan of study to extend their planned time to degree. All students must complete the degree in five years. Failure to complete degree requirements will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

Continuous Registration

Students are required to register in each mandatory term of their degree (fall and spring semesters of both program years, and the summer between them, for the first clinical rotation). Students who do not plan to register during a mandatory term must request a leave of absence.

Remediation Policy for Students not Meeting Performance Expectations

Students who are not meeting performance expectations may be required to complete additional work or work in a different format to demonstrate competency prior to graduation. Students will be considered for one of these alternatives in the following circumstances:

1. Any student who receives a grade of "B-" on one or more of the basic biomedical courses
2. Any student who does not demonstrate adequate progress or performance in Clinical Training as indicated by their clinical evaluation
3. Any student whose thesis is not progressing according to the established timeline
4. Any student on academic probation

Remedies to be considered include:

1. Repeating course(s) or portions of courses
2. Tutoring with faculty members or instructors, or other services provided within the University
3. Additional clinical supervision in the areas needing improvement
4. Recommendation/Referral for external support
5. An oral Practical Examination
6. Other methods to meet the specific needs of the students as determined by the UPMSGC program leadership and the Associate Dean of Master's Programs, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine

When performance is first recognized to be inadequate, the program leadership will meet with the student as early as reasonable after the semester grades and/or clinical evaluations are available. At this meeting, the recommended remedy will be discussed, and a proposed plan will be drafted. The plan will be formally written and signed by both the Program Director and the student. An original will be given to the student and a copy placed in the student's file.

Students may take a leave of absence, during which the student may complete remedial or missing coursework. Upon request, students will receive continued access to library and academic resources during their leave.

If the student does not agree with the need for remedies, they may file a grievance as described below.

Appeal of a Grade

Evaluation of a student's performance is the responsibility of the instructor. Therefore, if a graduate student wishes to have an evaluation, exam, or grade in a course reviewed, they must first discuss the matter with their instructor. Should the student and instructor not find a satisfactory resolution, or should a discussion prove impossible, the student may submit a request in writing to the Program Director, within two weeks of receiving the grade in question.

Should a final grade in a course be disputed, the student must submit a written appeal to the instructor within the first two weeks of the academic semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was received. The instructor must respond in writing to the student within two weeks of receiving the written appeal from the student. If, after receiving the written response to the appeal from the instructor, the student still believes that the grade has been unfairly assigned, the student must submit a written appeal to the Program Director.

If the matter is not resolved with the aid of the Program Director, students may ask that that their request be elevated to the Associate Dean for PSOM Master's and Certificate Programs for further review according to the official Grievance Policy of the MaC office, as described in the section below.

The institutional governance and oversight of the MSGC Program resides in the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) Office of Master's and Certificate Programs (MaC) (https://www.med.upenn.edu/psom/masters.html) within the Office of the Vice Dean for Research and Research Training.

Grievance Policy

The MaC Student Grievance Process

We follow the official Grievance Process established by the PSOM Office of Master's and Certificate Programs. You can see the full policy at https://www.med.upenn.edu/maccentral/mac-student-grievance-process.html?preview=true or on the pdf in the appendix to this handbook.

In summary, the process or addressing academic grievances is to follow this line of communication, with the goal of resolving the conflict between the people directly involved in it.

The full policy details exactly what steps should be taken at what points in the process for academic and other types of grievances. It also provides the contact names and information for the relevant individuals. That list is also provided here as an appendix to this handbook.

The MSGC Program Ombuds

The program also provides another resource for addressing and resolving conflict that can come into play if you have attempted unsuccessfully to resolve the conflict directly, or if doing that would not be appropriate for some reason.

One or two students from each cohort volunteer to serve as the Ombuds for their class, providing an alternate way for students to express concerns, anonymously if desired, to the program leadership. The concerns may involve other students, instructors, lecturers, or members of program leadership. The Ombuds helps to formalize the concerns in writing on a form that they then share with the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator determines the appropriate person, someone who is not involved in the issue at hand, in program leadership or beyond to address the concern.

The University Ombuds

Students may also take concerns to the University Ombuds whose mission is to "ameliorate those conditions that may impede community members finding satisfaction with their lives at Penn." The University Ombuds helps members of the Penn community who are experiencing difficulty, conflict or confusion within their academics or work. The Ombuds offers an accessible and safe place to resolve differences, explore matters of concern, improve communication, and generate and evaluate options. More information can be found at: https://ombuds.upenn.edu/.

Leave of Absence

A student may request a leave of absence at any time. Students may wish to take a leave for various reasons, including but not limited to, personal circumstances, military service, health issues, or family medical leave. A leave of absence may be granted by the Program Director for up to one year with the possibility of renewal.

Requesting a leave of absence:

To request a leave of absence, students must

1. Contact the Program Director with

   a. a written request for a leave of absence and an estimated date of return

   b. a request to set up a meeting to discuss the situation and determine the next steps

2. Once the Program Director has approved the leave of absence, students must notify the Office of Master's and Certificate Programs by completing the form at https://hosting.med.upenn.edu/forms/mdprogram/view.php?id=52824.

★ Failing to register for coursework without permission from the University does not constitute a leave of absence.

★ If the student requests leave after the start of the term, all normal drop and withdrawal policies apply.

★ It is the student's responsibility to maintain communication with the program and to be aware of various administrative deadlines, including those for federal loans. If a student fails to return from leave within the set time limit or request a renewal, they will be dismissed from the program.

Returning from a leave of absence

When returning from leave, students must

1. Contact the Program Director **at least thirty days before the start of the term** in which they plan to return to confirm they are returning.

2. Returning students must also complete this MachForm https://hosting.med.upenn.edu/forms/mdprogram/view.php?id=21578 for the Office of Master's and Certificate Programs.

Financial implications of a leave of absence

Leave of absence will affect any student loans—those sought to pay for this degree as well as those from previous academic work. Loans may go into repayment before the end of the leave. Students are encouraged to talk to a counselor in Student Registration and Financial Services prior to taking a leave of absence to ensure they understand and have plans for possible financial implications.

Withdrawing from the Program

Students may withdraw from the program at any time. Students considering withdrawal are strongly encouraged to discuss their situation and options with the Program Director before commencing official withdrawal proceedings. After discussion, the student will be asked to prepare a letter for the Program Director, including the departure timeline and reasons for withdrawal. The Program Director will forward the letter to the Associate Dean of the Office of Master's and Certificate Programs.

Students are responsible for dropping all registered courses in the semester they wish to withdraw to stop the billing process. Withdrawal from the program does *not* automatically cancel course registration). Students are responsible for all tuition charges and other financial obligations to the University incurred prior to the effective date of withdrawal.

Dismissal

Students are expected to abide by the regulations set forth by the University of Pennsylvania and the written policies and procedures of their respective departments. The University reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for unsatisfactory academic performance or for conduct detrimental to the University or to the welfare of other students. Departments also reserve the right to dismiss a student if it is determined that a student's conduct is unprofessional or is not consistent with the code of ethics of their intended profession.

A student may be dropped from the program for reasons listed below. As with a voluntary withdrawal, students will be responsible for any charges or financial obligations to the University incurred before the effective date of the drop.

1. Time Limit: Students are expected to complete their degree within five years of matriculation. Should a student fail to complete their degree within the time limit, the program may drop the student.

2. Academic Progress: Students are expected to maintain continuous registration, maintain a GPA of at least 3.0, carry incomplete marks for no more than a year, and achieve grades of B- or better in all coursework. If a student does not meet these criteria, they may be placed on probation—with an opportunity to remediate issues with their progress—or dropped from the program.

3. Academic Integrity: Students are expected to follow the University Code of Academic Integrity. Violations of this code may result in the student being dropped from the program.

4. Student conduct detrimental to the University or to the welfare of other students: Students are expected to follow the University Code of Student Conduct. Conduct that violates the code of academic and/or professional ethics may result in the student being dropped from the program.

5. Unsatisfactory performance/progress in a Clinical Internship.

6. Inadequate progress in thesis research.

7. Failure to complete required plan for remediation.

8. If there is no communication from a student who has enrolled in courses after the program has reached out, the program can drop them from the courses.

A student dropped from the program will receive a letter stating that they have been dropped along with the reason for their drop.

Academic Procedures

Procedures for Taking Examinations, Tests and Quizzes

1. To eliminate suspicious behavior during any type of examination, no use of internet, online sites or a smart phone is allowed unless required to take the exam online or otherwise indicated by the instructor. All books, notes, note cards, papers, materials and instruments are to be left in a designated location away from the testing area, except for those materials previously specified by the faculty member or instructor.

2. The faculty member or instructor may remain in the room. If the faculty member or instructor leaves the room after the initial questions have been asked, they must remain accessible and may return to answer questions that arise during the examination.

3. Requests for clarification of questions must be directed only to the faculty member or instructor.

4. Silence is to be maintained in the exam room.

5. If possible, students should occupy every other seat.

6. Students are not to leave the test area unless an emergency arises, or by grant of permission. Faculty members' or Instructors' policies on leaving the testing area should be specified beforehand. If a student does leave the room, their laptop/test paper must be left behind.

7. In fairness to all students, each student must finish the examination by the end of the examination period. The examination time can be lengthened only if granted at the beginning of the period and only if the extension applies to all students. (This rule does not apply to students with accommodations from the Weingarten Center, whose test taking time limits can be extended according to their needs.)

Procedures for Take-Home Tests

Unless the faculty member or instructor specifically explains otherwise, a take-home exam should be treated as an in-class exam.

1. If students are given a certain period of time to take the test, they must record the start and stop times and adhere to the limit.

2. Students must take the exam over a continuous period of time.

3. Consulting books, notes, the internet, or other outside materials while taking the exam is not permitted unless otherwise specified by the faculty member or instructor.

4. Students are not permitted to consult classmates or other individuals for help.

5. The exam must be returned at the time and in the manner (whether as a paper copy or a scanned/electronic copy) indicated by the faculty member or instructor.

Procedures for Papers, Reports, and Other Written Work

1. When preparing all written work, students should take great care to fully acknowledge the source or sources of all ideas, language, diagrams, charts, or images (including but not limited to drawings, designs or photographs) etc., that are not their own. Intentionally appropriating the ideas, images or language of another person and presenting them without attribution is plagiarism. This includes the purchase or acquisition of papers from any source. To avoid committing plagiarism, the following rules must be observed:

   - Any sequence of words appearing in an essay or other writing assignment that are not the student's words must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source identified in a manner designated by the instructor.

   - A paraphrase should not be enclosed in quotation marks but should be footnoted and the source given.

   - An interpretation based on an identifiable source must be so attributed.

2. A student wishing to seek assistance from another student (i.e., proofreading for typographical errors) should consult the instructor to determine if such assistance is permissible. If permitted, such assistance should be acknowledged in the written work.

   - If instructors permit students to seek the assistance of other students on academic work, the exact nature of the assistance must be acknowledged in detail. This refers not just to papers, but also to class work and computer programs.

   - Any use of a commercial writing service is forbidden.

For specific questions, students should consult with the individual faculty member or instructor.

Clinical Training

Description and Guidelines

Description of First Year Internships

During the first year of the UPMSGC program, students are required to complete three internships. During the first year of the program, students have three distinct fieldwork experiences including:

- observations with genetic counselors in clinical practice

- rotations in a laboratory setting working closely with laboratory genetic counselors

- placements in a research, industry or advocacy capacity with a specific organization or research protocol

Since this is the first exposure to these settings the experience is primarily observational, but as students near the end of each placement, they are encouraged to take on a more active role. During the first year, students attend their internships once a week. The course associated with first year internship is GENC 6700. All internships are assigned by the Associate Director, Clinical Education, and are based upon the students' interests and experiences.

Guidelines for First Year Internships

First year internships expose genetic counseling students to genetic counselor roles in different settings. These may include observations with genetic counselors in clinical practice, rotations in a laboratory setting, and placements in a research and/or advocacy capacity with a specific organization or research protocols. Internships may utilize telehealth and telephone counseling. Students are required to document their experiences online daily in Typhon. Students attend their internships once a week. Genetic counseling supervisors evaluate the students in each of the placements.

Description of Second Year Clinical Internships

Students complete four clinical internships to satisfy the required 80 days. Students are required to complete 20 days at each of the four rotations.

The first clinical internship is completed during the summer, between May and July. This rotation allows students to attend clinic 3-4 days per week to experience the real-time functioning of a clinical genetics program, including following through on cases.

The goal of the **first clinical internship** is to allow the novice genetic counseling student the opportunity to speak with patients and to learn to obtain information from them. Patients often intimidate the beginner. The students must overcome their apprehension and become comfortable interviewing a variety of different patients. One of the main objectives of this rotation is to ensure that the counseling student learns to be flexible in his/her interviewing style to adjust to the patients' needs and level of understanding. Students need to learn to assess their own progress and to discuss areas of strength and

weakness with their supervisors. As the student progresses, the supervisor should allow the student to take on more responsibility for the session.

Students are required to document all cases in Typhon (see more below). This includes all cases observed and all cases with active participation. Fifty participatory encounters (previously known as core cases) are required to satisfy ACGC requirements. The program provides students with a template to record cases. Students are required to document participation in the Practice Based Competencies (PBCs).

The **second clinical internship** often begins in early September and continues for 10 weeks. Students typically attend this rotation two days each week. Students are excused from clinic during the National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Conference. While students will be assuming greater responsibility for cases, the setting for this rotation may be quite different than the student's first rotation. Therefore, there may be a renewed time of observation and learning before the student moves forward.

The **third clinical internship** is scheduled from the end of November until the end of February. Students typically attend this rotation two days each week. Supervisors and students will need to set goals based on the students' progress and experience in previous rotations.

The **fourth clinical internship** starts in mid-February and continues through the end of April. Students will attend this rotation two - three days each week. It is expected that students will be able to conduct full sessions with minimal supervision by the end of this rotation.

A schedule with specific dates is prepared and distributed yearly. The four rotations will reflect a variety of settings and clinical practices. The interests and skills of the individual students will be considered in making clinical assignments.

Guidelines for Second Year Clinical Internships

During the second year of the UPMSGC Program, students are required to complete 80 days of clinical experience. All clinical rotations are assigned by the Associate Director, Clinical Education, after discussion with the students, Program Director, and potential supervisors. The rotations are determined based upon the students' interests and previous experiences. Second year clinical internships are course GENC 6800.

The goals for clinical rotations are to:

1. Orient the genetic counseling student to the specific clinical setting.

2. Instill an appreciation for the delivery of genetic services, including scheduling, billing, and departmental policies.

3. Familiarize the student with obtaining and reviewing medical records.

The goals for the student are to:

1. Acquire experience with laboratory services such as selecting a lab, obtaining informed consent, completing requisitions, and understanding and communicating results.

2. Observe diagnostic procedures and physical exams.

3. Participate in continuing professional educational experiences such as journal clubs, rounds, and case conferences.

4. Observe and participate in genetic counseling cases: preparation, intake, pedigree construction and analysis, counseling, documentation, and follow up.

This list is intended as a guide to student activities in clinical placements. Each clinical site and student will have unique needs, and circumstances and each student will progress at his/her own rate.

Every student is required to set individual goals for each rotation by completing the self-assessment form to monitor his/her progress. These goals are discussed between the student and clinical supervisor at the beginning of each rotation. The student, with the help of the supervisor, works towards these goals during the rotation. Goals may be modified as the internship progresses.

The student must receive timely feedback throughout the rotation. In addition to comments on individual cases, a regular time for supervision sessions to assess overall progress needs to be scheduled. The supervisor uses the students' goals as well as the evaluation form provided to guide this assessment.

A completed evaluation form should be reviewed with the student and returned to the Associate Director, Clinical Education, at the end of the rotation. The form is shared with the Program Director and stored in the student's permanent record. All students will complete two evaluation forms of each clinical internship site at the end of a rotation. One form is shared with the clinical supervisors (the Supervisor Evaluation Form) and one form (Site Evaluation Form) is used to provide feedback to the UPMSGC Program. **If the supervisor does not schedule a time for reviewing the evaluation forms, the student should request it.**

Guidelines for Summer Rotations away from the University of Pennsylvania

With approval from the Program Director and Associate Director, Clinical Education, students in good academic standing may complete a summer rotation away from the University of Pennsylvania in place of or in addition to one of the four scheduled rotations. The process for obtaining an *ad hoc* summer rotation is as follows:

1. The student meets with the Associate Director, Clinical Education, to discuss the student's interests and geographical desires. Approval for an ad hoc summer rotation is at the discretion of the Program Director and only for students in good academic standing.

2. The student and Associate Director, Clinical Education, agree upon clinical supervisors to contact and which of them should make the initial contact.

3. The Associate Director, Clinical Education, contacts the proposed supervisor and discusses the Guidelines for clinical rotations and completes any necessary institutional agreements.

iPad Loans for Rotations

The program has purchased six iPads that are available for loan to students who need them for specific clinical rotations. The loan form is included in the appendix of this handbook, but the form should be completed and submitted through this link:
https://somapps.med.upenn.edu/forms/zulu/view.php?id=113486.

Clearances and Training Requirements

HIPAA Training

Federal Law requires the University of Pennsylvania Health System and the University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) to train all members of its workforce and student body on its policies and procedures with respect to the privacy of protected health information. The rules require that the training must be provided to each member of the covered entity's workforce.

All PSOM faculty, staff, and students will need to complete this education to maintain compliance with UPHS and PSOM privacy policies and to maintain their credentialing agreement, if applicable. The education is provided to ensure HIPAA regulatory compliance and to implement improved privacy practices throughout UPHS and the PSOM. Tracking and Compliance Reporting will be generated electronically and reported to Department Chairs and PSOM Administration.

The online HIPAA training is designed to:
- Be completed in under 30 minutes.
- Be web-accessible, available 24/7 through KnowledgeLink.
- Provide for automatic tracking and compliance reporting.

Complete the Protecting Patient Information (HIPAA) training on the Workday Learning site (https://www.myworkday.com/upenn/learning) before beginning your first internship.

1. Log in with your PennKey and password. You should then see a short code on the screen and receive a Duo push prompt on your phone with space to enter it.
2. Click on *Browse Learning Content* and enter "Protecting Patient Information" in the lower search box.
3. Click the START COURSE link to begin.
4. There is an assessment at the end of the module. You must achieve 80% to pass. When you click on submit after completing the course, please allow for the assessment to be scored and for your confirmation page to load. This should not take longer than 30 seconds. If you do not wait for the assessment to be submitted, your data may be lost.
5. Upload your completion certificate to Canvas (GENC 6700).

Background Check/Drug Screens

Prior to beginning clinical placements, students are required to complete a Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check, FBI Clearance, and PA Child Abuse History Clearance, OIG/GSA checks, social security number trace, and sex offender website checks. The OIG/GSA Sanctions Report is comprised of the following components: OIG (Office of Inspector General) and GSA (General Services Administration). The OIG/GSA search utilizes the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office of Inspector General's database for individuals and businesses excluded or sanctioned from participating in Medicare, Medicaid, or other federally funded programs.

Complio/American Databank is the company used for background screening and immunization compliance. If the check is not clear, students may not be able to participate in the clinical education component of the curriculum and thus will not be able to graduate.

Students who have been convicted of a felony will most likely not be granted a license to practice genetic counseling by any state currently issuing licenses for genetic counselors.

Increasingly individual clinical sites require additional background clearances prior to participating in a clinical experience. These may include but are not limited to additional child abuse clearances, FBI background checks, and fingerprinting.

In addition, clinical sites require students to undergo a multi-panel drug screen. Students register electronically with Complio/American Databank, a web-based screening company, and complete the testing through them. The results will be available to the student, the Program Director and the Associate Director – Clinical Education via a secure web portal. Students will have the ability to share this information with the necessary clinical facilities in a secure manner on an as-needed basis.

It is the student's responsibility to search out, confirm, and meet these requirements and any additional ones imposed by the assigned clinical site as the requirements are frequently updated. Failure to do so will jeopardize the student's ability to participate in a clinical experience and thus jeopardize completion of the curriculum. Unacceptable results from any check will be reviewed by the MSGC program and may result in dismissal from the program.

In the event of any positive finding on any check/clearance/screen, the student will meet with the Program Director to determine the consequences.

CDC & OSHA

There are potential health risks for a practitioner in any healthcare setting. In an effort to minimize those risks, all students will be trained in infection control per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Students are required to receive clearance for program participation through physical examinations and immunization/titer requirements in order to protect students and patients during the academic and clinical portions of the curriculum. The use of standard precautions is required during all portions of the curriculum and details may be found at the CDC website www.cdc.gov and specifically http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/2007IP/2007ip_part2.html.

Clinical Training Policies

Attendance Policy for Clinical Rotations

Attendance is required for clinical placements. Students must notify their clinical supervisors if they are unable to attend their internship. Each student will be allowed two excusable absences for the entire school year. After two clinical days are missed, arrangements must be made with the supervisor to make up the days.

Code of Conduct for Clinical Placements

Genetic counseling students must behave with paramount concern for patients' welfare and show respect for the rights of patients. In addition, they must adhere to the highest standards of intellectual integrity and honesty in their interactions with patients, colleagues, faculty, and administrators. Students are expected to adhere to all standards of the University of Pennsylvania and PSOM including, but not limited to, the PSOM Code of Student of Conduct- https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-student-conduct/

Dress Code for Clinical Placements

All clinical placements associated with the UPMSGC have dress codes. Students who have contact with patients must be aware of and in compliance with the standards at each institution. The MSGC program requires that all students maintain high standards in personal appearance, dress, health, and hygiene. Appearance should reflect a professional standard that supports a positive message of competence, safety, and friendliness, pride in who we are and pride in the organization we represent.

Because of varying departmental needs and services, clinical sites may establish individual standards. However, standards of cleanliness, safety and professional appearance must be consistently applied. Apparel should be in keeping with the professional atmosphere of the medical center and appropriate to the department and/or work of the wearer. Dress should not detract from or inhibit doing the work or be a distraction to the patient being seen.

While on clinical rotations, genetic counseling students must be dressed in accordance with the dress code of the site in which they are working. Maintaining personal hygiene and wearing appropriate attire help to establish rapport with patients and are important to good patient care.

1. Clothing should be clean and pressed.
2. Appropriate undergarments should be worn and in a manner that is not visible to others.
3. Cologne, perfume, or other scented body products may be prohibited or restricted if necessary to ensure the comfort and safety of patients, families, or co-workers.
4. Clothing or accessories that contain statements of profanity, refer to drug or alcohol, or other inappropriate insignia are not permitted.
5. Clothing or accessories that present safety concerns, including but not limited to open-toed shoes, sandals, or excessive jewelry are not permitted in patient care areas.
6. Each clinical site sets its own standards regarding piercings and visible tattoos.
7. A name badge identifying the individual as a genetic counseling student is required at all times.

Please also see https://www.med.upenn.edu/student/dress-code-policy/

Student Information Shared with Clinical Sites

Contractual agreements with clinical facilities require our students to be prepared for the clinical setting concerning academic performance, previous clinical performance, health requirements, and in many instances, a variety of background checks and drug screens. The Program Director and Associate Director – Clinical Education share any of the above information with the clinical sites as required for participation in clinical education at a facility or as deemed beneficial to the success of the student. Personal information will be shared by mailing hard copies, in-person/hand-delivery, web-based authorization by students (drug screening), or phone conversations to those directly involved with the clinical education of the student. In the event a student is not in good academic standing, full disclosure to a site engaged in clinical remediation is necessary for the benefit of the site and the success of the student. Each student signs a release acknowledging the priority of patient safety and thus permitting this exchange of information.

Documentation of Cases and Progress

Logbook Documentation - Typhon

Typhon is a web-based tracking system that students use to document their clinical observations and experiences during their two years in the program. Typhon can be accessed on phones, tablets, and laptops. Typhon is also used to record conferences students attend, teaching experiences, and advocacy activities, all of which are required by the ACGC Standards for Accreditation.

Students will be emailed a unique login and a password to access Typhon. In addition to recording information, students can also access a directory of clinical sites and clinical supervisors.

Students are required to document every case they see during the program in Typhon. This documentation helps ensure that students are on track to meet the case requirements they need to graduate and sit for the ABGC board exam. Students must complete the clinical reflection statement entirely as required by the ACGC. The following are sample responses: "My supervisor commented on how I have to become more comfortable using an interpreter and she gave me the following suggestions.... My supervisor said that this session flowed much better, but I have to work on...."

★ **If case documentation is not completed by the deadline for a clinical rotation, students will receive a grade of U for that internship and will not be permitted to attend their next internship.**

Forms for Clinical Rotations

All forms for Clinical Rotations are posted and stored on Canvas (GENC 6700 and GENC 6800)

1. **Self-Assessment Form:** Second year students complete the self-assessment form prior to each clinical rotation. The student reviews the form with the Clinical Supervisor and turns it in to the Associate Director, Clinical Education on Canvas GENC 6800.

2. **Clinic Rotation Evaluation Form:** Clinical Supervisors complete this form to evaluate students' performance during each rotation. Supervisors review the form with the student at the completion of the rotation and submit it through REDCap. The evaluation form is then forwarded to the Associate Director for Clinical Education for review and placed in the student's academic files.

   ★ **It is the student's responsibility to request this final review with the Clinical Supervisor if it has not already been scheduled.**

3. **Supervisor Evaluation Form:** This form is completed by the student at the end of the rotation. The student returns the completed form to the Associate Director, Clinical Education who will share it with the Clinical Supervisors.

4. **Site Evaluation Form:** This form is completed by the student at the end of the rotation. The student returns the completed form to the Associate Director, Clinical Education, who does not share the information with the site.

5. **Logbook form:** Students document each case in which they actively participate on the logbook form, indicating their specific roles for that case. For a case to count, students must check off at least three different practice-based competencies. Logbook forms must be signed by Clinical Supervisor(s) and uploaded to Canvas GENC 6800 at the end of each internship.

Thesis Research

Full details about thesis requirements can be found on the Canvas Thesis site. The Thesis Project process begins in August of the first year. Students are expected to view a variety of project videos and identify projects that interest them from the Canvas site. Students will meet with the Director of Research (Rebecca Mueller) in October and November to discuss thesis project selection. In anticipation of these meetings, the student will complete a preparatory form on Canvas to guide thesis selection.

Students generally work with an established investigator at Penn or CHOP on data sets or projects they are developing. On occasion students identify mentorship to develop a project on their own. A thesis projects can be something a student starts from scratch, or they can be an ancillary analysis of a completed project, a brief report, review article, or academic commentary, so long as the goal of the work includes substantively contributing to a scholarly publication. Accordingly, thesis projects are diverse and the timelines of research activities depend on the nature of each project.

In general terms, by early in the spring semester of the first year, each student will be assigned a primary advisor who provides intellectual leadership of the project in collaboration with the student. By the end of the spring, each student will also be assigned a secondary advisor within the MSGC program who will offer additional support, guidance, and oversight for the thesis project. Students will often work with an MSGC program faculty or staff member as a primary advisor, in which case they will also have a secondary advisor who is an MSGC staff member, faculty, or instructor to provide additional oversight.

The timeline of activities varies based on each project but in general terms, the expectations by term are described below. The thesis project involves multiple interim deadlines. The types and timepoints of deadlines are detailed on the Thesis Canvas site.

Fall of First Year: Students review thesis videos, meeting with the Director of Research to discuss thesis selection. By late fall or early spring, students are assigned a thesis project and primary advisor.

Spring of First Year: Students take a semester-long thesis course with the Director of Research. In the class they develop their projects' aims with reference to the literature, design or access data collection tools, develop any needed IRB applications, and get approvals in place to work with existing data or collect new data.

Summer of Second Year: Depending on their projects, students gain IRB approval, start data collection, begin to consider plans for data analysis, and draft parts of the manuscript.

Fall of Second Year: Students make progress on writing parts of their manuscript, complete data collection, develop a plan for data analysis, and analyze their data.

Spring of Second Year: Early in the spring semester (generally January), students turn in a partial draft of their manuscript. The spring is devoted to completing any final analyses, expanding the background and discussion, honing the presentation of results, and developing and improving the manuscript. In February a full rough draft is due. The final version of the thesis manuscript is due in March.

Students will present at a GC Thesis Day Symposium in April. Students may also be asked to present at the Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors annual meeting and the PSOM Master's Student Colloquium, both of which occur in the spring. By the end of the program, students will submit the thesis abstract to a national conference. Students are expected to submit their manuscripts for publication the summer after graduation in accordance with the publication plan that they are responsible for developing with their advisors.

Additional Degree Requirements

Genetics Rounds

Penn and CHOP Genetics Rounds are held each Tuesday morning at 9:00 AM in the Hub for Clinical Collaboration at CHOP. During the academic year, all students must attend Rounds in person, unless they have conflicting clinical responsibilities, and participate in the discussion board following the presentation. Attendance is documented on Canvas. If there is a conflict between a clinical placement and Rounds attendance, students should discuss this with the Program Director and the Associate Director for Clinical Education.

Students must attend Rounds a minimum of five times during the summer between the first and second years.

This weekly clinical forum brings together practitioners involved in Genomic Medicine from both Penn and CHOP. The Genomic Medicine clinical services (pediatric, biochemical, adult, cancer, cardiovascular and lipid, maternal fetal medicine, neurogenetics/neuromuscular, Center for Fetal Diagnosis and Treatment) as well as the laboratory services (DGD, CPD, Molecular Pathology, Genetic Diagnostic Laboratory) take turns presenting.

To enhance learning for all and provide a teaching opportunity for the second-year students, the discussion board assignment expands on the topic addressed in Genetics Rounds. Each week, two second-year students prepare discussion questions to post on Canvas. All students in both the first and second year are required to post at least one response each week, while the second-year students who prepared the questions moderate the discussion.

Standardized Patients

All students participate in standardized patient (SP) sessions through the PSOM Standardized Patient Program. These sessions occur at key clinical checkpoints in the first and second year of training – typically in May of the first year and in December and April of the second year. SP sessions are used to practice counseling skills and conduct full genetic counseling sessions. Sessions are recorded and reviewed by SPs, program leadership and clinical supervisors using an evaluation form to document skill development, strengths, and missed opportunities. Written assignments provide opportunities for students to evaluate their own sessions. Many courses include role play experiences to help students prepare for the Standardized Patient sessions and actual clinical settings.

JEDI Seminar Series

In the first year, this seminar series provides a space for more in-depth discussion of topics including racism, bias, health disparities, and social justice to increase multicultural sensitivity and knowledge on health disparities and better understand health systems, population health, social determinants of health and how institutional racism affects racial disparities and healthcare delivery.

Teaching Requirements

All students are required to participate in **10 hours per year** of teaching. Common teaching opportunities include:

- Class presentations
- Case or journal club presentations during clinical rotations
- Participati0n in an admissions open house or career day to educate prospective students about the program and the field of genetic counseling
- Peer reviewing a classmate's Standardized Patient session
- Moderating the discussion board for Genetics Rounds
- Presenting research at a conference

Teaching activities are logged into Typhon in the same way clinic experience and volunteer activities are recorded. Teaching logs are submitted in Canvas at the end of the first and second years of the program.

Advocacy and Volunteer Requirements

The program supports a number of advocacy events throughout the year, including:

- rideAtaxia
- 22q and Boo
- a fundraiser the Kelly Anne Dolan Memorial Fund
- 22q at the Zoo
- the Fetal Center Family Reunion
- the Million Dollar Bike Ride
- CoolCars for Kids

Students are encouraged to participate in these events and/or others in their areas of interest or that are connected with their clinical rotations. MSGC students are required to complete 10 advocacy and/or volunteer hours per year. They track these hours in Typhon and at the end of each year submit a spreadsheet with their volunteer hours in Canvas.

Graduation Requirements & Procedures

The MSGC degree is conferred by the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine and is granted in May.

Readiness for Graduation Review

In January of the second year, each student meets individually with the Program Director to review progress in course work, counseling skills acquisition and thesis research to assess readiness for graduation and discuss the final semester and post-graduation plans. The forms for this meeting are included in the Appendix.

Administrative Steps

During the spring semester, graduating students must complete a number of tasks in preparation of graduation. The Program Coordinator emails details and firm deadlines to all eligible candidates.

1. To be considered for conferral of the MSGC degree, students must complete a "**graduation application**" approximately three months prior to the expected conferral date. At this time, they also certify their "diploma name." That name will also be used in the commencement program.

2. Prospective graduates must update their contact information and confirm their post-graduation address for the mailing of their diploma.

Ordering Regalia

Regalia are <u>not</u> required for the MSGC program graduation program but are required for students who opt to participate in the University graduation procession and ceremony. Typically, regalia can be picked up or ordered through the Penn bookstore in March, but procedures change from year to year, so read your graduation-related email carefully.

Exit Interview

Between the end of final exams and graduation, each student meets with the Program Director for their exit interview. The interviews last approximately 45 minutes.

Goals of the exit interview:

1. To review the student's logbook to ensure that fifty core cases have been obtained. The fifty participatory cases must reflect the ACGC standards.

2. To discuss post-graduation plans in terms of jobs or job search and when the student will take the ABGC exam.

3. To reflect together on the student's time in the program, to share strengths, weaknesses, concerns, etc.

Graduation Check Out Form

Prior to the exit interview, students must complete the "Graduation Check Out" form at
https://hosting.med.upenn.edu/forms/zulu/view.php?id=554525. The form collects post-graduation
contact information and student certification that they have made plans for their email account and
research data. A pdf of this form is included in the appendix.

Required Documentation

The student must email the following items to the Program Director and Program Coordinator PRIOR TO
THE exit interview:

1. **Fully legible horizontal logbook sheets with supervisor signatures**. **The 50 core cases** should be
   highlighted.
2. Downloaded pdf or Excel spreadsheet from Typhon documenting teaching experience
3. Downloaded pdf or Excel document from Typhon documenting advocacy and volunteer activities
4. Laptop or iPad to review Typhon cases, teaching experiences and supplemental training records.

Financial Aid Exit Counseling

Students who have obtained federal or campus-based loans to finance their education at UPenn will
receive emails from the Student Financial Services office about exit counseling prior to graduation. Exit
counseling sessions must be completed before the deadline provided in these emails. Failure to do so
will result in the withholding of grades, transcripts, and diplomas.

Final Transcripts, Diplomas and Degree Verification Letters

Detailed information about receiving your **physical diploma** will come from the Office of Master's and
Certificate Programs (MaC) prior to graduation. It will be your responsibility to complete the required
forms and provide the mailing address for your diploma. Printed diplomas are usually mailed in July.

Degrees are not conferred the day of graduation but must be verified by the Office of the Registrar,
entered into the system and updated before being added to your **transcript**. This process can take
several weeks.

A copy of your final transcript, showing your degree, or of your diploma is required when you apply for
licensure and the certification exam. So that you don't have to wait for your final transcript, the MaC
Registrar can provide a **degree verification letter** for you. They can also complete the **verification of
education forms** that many states require with licensure applications. You can email the form to the
MaC Registrar, Jeffrey Kisler, at jkisler@upenn.edu and explain what you need. Please copy Jo
MacKenzie on the email so she can assist in case there have been changes in the process.

Graduation and Access to UPenn Accounts and Resources

Penn Email Accounts

Penn closes student email accounts shortly after graduation. Since you may have important emails related to registration for conferences and the ABGC board exam, thesis research or abstract submissions, or your job search, you should make a plan before graduation to transfer important messages to your personal email or new professional email account.

Quaker Gmail (@alumni.upenn.edu)

Quaker Gmail is an email service for Penn alumni on the Google Apps for Education platform. Email addresses have the @alumni.upenn.edu format and work like other fully functional web-based email accounts on the Gmail platform. For more information and to create and account, visit: https://www.alumni.upenn.edu/s/1587/gid2/16/interior.aspx?sid=1587&gid=2&pgid=15207.

Penn+Box

Students and any co-owners do not have access to Penn+Box following graduation, so it is essential that ownership of any research materials be turned over to someone in the program leadership and your thesis mentors. Here is a link to an article on how to transfer Penn Box folders / files while the current owner is still active at Penn: https://support.box.com/hc/en-us/articles/360044196273-Managing-Collaborators#transferfolderowner

PennCards

Your regular PennCard will be deactivated at the time of your graduation, but you will be eligible to apply for an Alumni PennCard which will give you access to and discounts for many Penn resources. The Alumni PennCard is valid for 10 years for a cost of $30. For more information visit https://penncard.business-services.upenn.edu/alumni.

You can apply in person at the Penn Card Center in the bookstore or by mail. It takes 6-8 weeks for the PennCard Center to have access to recent graduation information, so you should check with them in advance to be sure your card can be made.

Canvas Courses

PennKeys do not expire, so graduates can still log into Canvas with their PennKey username and password. However, access to particular Canvas sites can vary. For information on accessing Canvas courses after graduation, see Penn's Canvas After Graduation instructions at https://infocanvas.upenn.edu/canvas-after-graduation/.

Penn Libraries

Alumni with Alumni PennCards are able to access some library resources and services. Additional services are accessible for a small fee. See the information just above on Alumni PennCards. For a guide to alumni services at the Penn libraries, visit: https://guides.library.upenn.edu/alumniservices.

REDCap

Students do NOT have access to REDCap following graduation, so it is essential that ownership of any instruments be turned over to the primary thesis mentor in the program leadership.

Honors and Awards

Graduation Honors

The Genetic Counseling Distinguished Student Award

One student from the graduating class is chosen for both academic excellence (GPA, as provided by the Registrar's office) and application of counseling theory to provide personalized and empathetic patient care. The Genetic Counseling Program leadership determines the awardee each year. The first award was presented in 2010.

The Excellence in Counseling Award

The excellence in counseling award is presented to the student who exemplifies the best counseling skills in his/her clinical placements and has strong academic credentials. The Excellence in Counseling Award committee, composed of clinical supervisors and previous award recipients, reviews the students nominated for the award.

Award for Advocacy and Volunteerism in Genetic Counseling

This award recognizes a graduate who exemplifies the goals of advocacy, service, and outreach in support of the field and improved patient care, essential components of the genetic counseling profession.

Published Research Award

This award is presented on Thesis Day to the graduate from the previous year who is the first in the graduating class to have their thesis research accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Scholarships and Fellowships

The Marie Barr Genetic Counseling Research Award – CdLS and Related Diagnoses

This is a competitive award given to a second-year student with strong academic and counseling credentials who is interested in completing a thesis project on Cornelia de Lange syndrome or other rare developmental diagnoses. The award recognizes Marie Barr, one of the first genetic counselors in the Philadelphia area. It seeks to "promote the development of expertise in genetic counseling issues related to rare developmental diagnoses." The award was established in 2014 by Laird Jackson, MD, and Ian Krantz, MD, director of the Center for Cornelia de Lange Syndrome and Related Diagnoses at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. It includes a stipend of $2,000 to fund the student's thesis project.

The application consists of a CV/resume and a brief (no more than a page) letter of interest explaining why the student wants to work on a thesis project with the CdLS Center as well as any other qualifications the student may have. The application is typically due in late February, and the recipient is notified by the end of March. The Clinical Director of the CdLS Center at CHOP determines who will receive the award. The award is presented annually at Thesis Day.

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Fellowship

The LEND program at CHOP is funded by the Maternal Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It has a mission to "support the development of exemplary expertise, skills, and competence in the care of children with neurodevelopmental and related disorders, including children from medically underserved populations; and to instill the qualities that promote interpersonal leadership in the service of improving the quality of life and outcomes for these children and their families" (LEND Trainee Handbook).

Applicants for the LEND fellowship should have a particular interest in pediatrics, neurodevelopmental disability, advocacy, and/or underserved populations. LEND provides fellows with extra training in these areas and the opportunity to work directly with community programs designed to improve care for these populations.

LEND fellows are second year students who are chosen via an application process that occurs during the spring semester of the first year. In recent years there has been funding for three GC LEND fellows, but that number depends on funding allotments. The genetic counseling discipline director for the LEND fellowship reviews the applications, interviews select applicants, and serves as the mentor to guide the fellow(s) in creating and executing a training plan for the LEND year.

Genetic Counseling LEND fellows receive a substantial stipend, but the amount may vary year-to-year depending on available funding. The fellowship typically runs from mid-July through May of the following year. Beginning in July, the LEND fellows spend one day a week (typically Monday) at CHOP throughout their second year of training, participating in academic, clinical, leadership, and community opportunities. For more details about the application process and the requirements of the fellow, see the page attached to this handbook.

Emergency Resources

UPenn Division of Public Safety

The Division of Public Safety (https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/) is a central source for information about police, fire, and emergency services, security services, including walking escorts, and special victim services.

For general information (not emergencies), call 215-898-7297.

If you see something, say something. Report suspicious behavior to Penn Police at 215-573-3333.

Contact UPenn Police for all on-campus emergencies:

On campus from a traditional phone	511
On campus from a cell phone connected to AirPennNet wireless network	511
Off campus	215-573-3333

Contact Philadelphia Police (and Fire) for all emergencies:

On campus from a traditional phone	911 or 9-911
On campus from a cell phone connected to PennNet wireless network	911 or 9-911
Off campus	911

Notify the Program Director as soon as possible about any emergency.

Request a Walking Escort

Request a Walking Escort (https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/about/security-services/) to walk with you to any location in the Penn Patrol Zone, between 30th Street and 43rd Streets, from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue 24/7; as well as within the UCD zone, west to 50th Street and north to Powelton between 10 PM – 3 AM.

How to Request a Walking Escort

- Ask any Public Safety Officer on patrol or inside a building
- Call 215-898-WALK (9255) or 511 (from campus phone)
- Use one of the many building and blue-light telephones located on and off Penn's campus.

Lockout & Jumpstart Services

Security Services offers free 24/7 lockout & jump-start services to anyone on Penn's campus. Simply call 215-573-3333 (511 from campus phone) and a Public Safety Officer will be dispatched to your location.

Non-traumatic Medical Emergencies

For a non-critical medical emergency, call 215-573-3333 for the [Alternative Response Unit (AR-1).](#) Students with non-traumatic injuries — from sprained ankles to intoxication and other medical conditions — will receive high-quality care and hospital transportation in the PFD's alternative response unit instead of an ambulance. The alternative unit is a marked SUV staffed by a paramedic lieutenant and an emergency medical technician. The AR-1 team works collaboratively with Penn's student-run Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) and Penn Police officers. Using the vehicle designated AR-1 to handle these types of calls also frees up ambulances to respond to more serious cases throughout the city. The PFD has 55 medic units that respond to about 800 EMS incidents every day in Philadelphia.

Appendix