

What is Genetic Counseling?

Genetic counseling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. This process integrates:

- Interpretation of family and medical histories to assess the chance of disease occurrence or recurrence.
- Education about inheritance, testing, management, prevention, resources and research.
- Counseling to promote informed choices and adaptation to the risk or condition.

National Society of Genetic Counselors, 2005

Who are Genetic Counselors?

Genetic counselors are Master's-trained healthcare professionals who combine their knowledge of human and medical genetics with skills in interpersonal communication and counseling to provide services to patients and their families.

Genetic counselors work in university medical centers, community clinics, physician offices, hospitals, advocacy organizations, governmental agencies, public health departments and biotechnology companies. They provide education and counseling in such areas as reproductive genetics, pediatric genetics, cancer genetics, neurogenetics and cardiovascular genetics. Many are also involved in teaching, research, laboratory counseling, and administration. Genetic Counseling is a highly dynamic and growing field. With the advances in genomic medicine, the demand for genetic counselors is greater than ever.



Contact Information

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Join the Genetic Counseling Profession

Emory University School of Medicine
Genetic Counseling Training Program

Emory Genetic Counseling Training Program

The Emory Genetic Counseling Training Program offers a unique combination of cutting-edge coursework, extensive and varied clinical experiences, and a research-based Focus Internship.

The program is housed within the Department of Human Genetics on the beautiful Emory University campus in Atlanta, GA. The Department ranks among the top 15 in the country with a full-fledged basic research faculty, and a comprehensive clinical genetics division.

The Emory Genetic Counseling Training Program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling.

Mission Statement

To provide an innovative and rigorous program of training that prepares genetic counselors to serve the needs of the healthcare community today while paving the way for incorporating the genomic medicine advances of tomorrow.



Program Overview

The Emory Genetic Counseling Training Program is 21 months comprised of 5 contiguous semesters of training. Students graduate with a Master of Medical Science degree (MMSc) in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling from the Emory University School of Medicine.

Curriculum

The curriculum blends advanced didactic instruction with extensive clinical training and research opportunities. Along with classes in Human and Medical Genetics, students take courses in Genetic Counseling Theory and Practice, Genetics of Common Diseases, Current Topics in Clinical Genetic Testing, Hot Topics in Genomics and Public Health Genomics among others.

Clinical Training

The clinical practicum experience begins in the second half of fall semester with 8 weeks of training in the basics of general, cancer and prenatal genetic counseling. Students also participate in clinical observations, role-play activities, and simulations with standardized patients. Clinical placements start in the first spring semester. All students complete 5, eight-week rotations in the core areas of **Prenatal, Cancer, and General Genetics**. These are supplemented by 5 four-week experiences in specialty clinics and programs such as Clinical Laboratory Genetic Counseling, Pediatric Cardiology, Neurology, Lysosomal Storage Disease Center, Bleeding Disorders & Ophthalmology Clinics, Reproductive Endocrinology, and the Jewish Genetic Disease telemedicine program.

Focus Internship

The Focus Internship provides an in-depth practice and research experience and spans the 5 semesters of the program.

Students work under the guidance of a mentor in a specific area of clinical/human genetics and develop/conduct a related research project. This experience culminates in a submitted meeting abstract and a completed manuscript.

Admissions

The Emory Genetic Counseling Training Program accepts 10-12 students per year. Admission requirements include:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
- Transcripts from all higher education institutions attended with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores
- Successful completion of course prerequisites: one semester or quarter of genetics, psychology, statistics and biochemistry
- Registration with the Genetic Counseling National Matching Service (natmatch.com/gcadmissions/)

Acceptance is based on several factors including:

- Academic preparedness (GPA and GRE scores)
- Personal references
- Written narrative statement
- Previous exposure to genetic counseling
- Experience with patient care, individuals with disabilities, supportive counseling and advocacy
- Interview process

Application Process

Any student committed and passionate about the field of genetic counseling is welcome to apply. Applications are accepted through late December of the year before entry into the program.

Prospective students are encouraged to visit nsgc.org and abgc.net to reinforce their knowledge of the profession and obtain suggestions on developing a strong application. We also welcome visitors and inquiries about the program.

Individuals selected for an interview are notified by January 31st. Interviews are held February through April, and notification of admission occurs through a national matching process in mid-April.

Further information can be found under "Admissions" on our website: genetics.emory.edu/gc_training.