

Genetic Counseling Certificate Program

The Department of Genetics offers an undergraduate **Genetic Counseling Certificate Program (GCCP)**. The GCCP program is intended for a select group of students interested in applying to the masters-level programs in genetic counseling. The goal is to provide students with guidance, coursework, and relevant clinical experience to improve their graduate school applications. This is a highly competitive option and is **only open to declared genetics majors**. Not all applicants will be accepted. The Certificate will be awarded only in conjunction with the awarding of a baccalaureate degree in genetics and does not replace minors. The certificate is NOT in lieu of completing the masters-level programs in genetic counseling. At the end of the program students will:

- understand genetic counseling as a profession
- understand application requirements for masters-level programs
- gain experience in talking with people who are in crisis
- gain experience in a clinical genetic counseling clinic

What is Genetic Counseling? The National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) defines genetic counseling as "...the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease" ([NSGC website](#)). Genetic counselors are healthcare professionals who have graduate-level training in medical genetics and counseling. They provide information and support to families and their children impacted by genetic conditions and/or traits. In addition, they serve as educators and a referral source to all health-care providers. For more information on the genetic counseling career see the NSGS website. Links to the various US and Canadian-based graduate programs in genetic counseling can be found here (<http://gceducation.org/Pages/Accredited-Programs.aspx>). Rutgers is one of the accredited graduate programs (<http://gcmp.rutgers.edu/>).

For more information on the career of Genetic Counseling, see these two videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yIW0L9dLCQ> (a Tedx Talk)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDjLazXGV0s>

Students accepted into the certificate program will meet weekly with the GCCP director during the semester in which they take the **Genetic Counseling Rotation Course (01:447:488)** and once per semester otherwise. This course involves a rotation at a local Genetic Counseling clinic. At the clinic, students will observe counseling sessions, perform literature searches, observe weekly clinical and ultrasound meetings, and assist with chart preparation. In addition, all successful applicants are expected to volunteer at a crisis hotline, such as **Crisis Text Line**, or similar experience. All questions about the GCCP should be directed to Dr. Gary Heiman (heiman@dls.rutgers.edu).

See reverse for prerequisites and required courses.

Required Courses (15 credits) and Volunteer Experience

1. Genetic Counseling Rotation Course (01:447:488; 3 credits)- special permission required.
2. Basic Statistics for Research (01:960:401; 3 credits)
3. General Psychology (01:830:101 or equivalent; 3 credits)
4. Abnormal Psychology (01:830:340 or equivalent; 3 credits)
5. One bioethics course (3 credits)- either:
 - a. Social, Legal and Ethical Implications of the New Genetics (01:447:354; Genetics Dept.)-****STRONGLY PREFERRED****
 - b. Biology, Society, and Biomedical Issues (01:119:150; Biological Sciences)
6. Crisis Volunteer Experience: Students must volunteer at an approved crisis hotline or similar experience, such as Caring Contact (Volunteer Package) or Crisis Text Line. This experience involves AT LEAST a one-year commitment (i.e. greater than two semesters) or equivalent and includes the training and volunteering on the hotline (i.e., ~100 hours). This requirement must be completed by the time the student graduates (both the training and volunteer components).

Prerequisites for Certificate Program:

1. Undergraduate student in Department of Genetics
2. Have a minimum 3.2 GPA (greater than 3.4 preferred)
3. Application interview with Dr. Gary Heiman (GCCP Program Director)
4. Have completed the Rutgers University Human Subjects Certification (IRB)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE GCCP WEBSITE:

<https://genetics.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/certificates/genetic-counseling>

