

# Master of Science in Genetic Counseling

## Program Overview

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The Boston University Genetic Counseling Program is committed to providing high-quality training through dynamic coursework, dedicated mentoring, diverse fieldwork and innovative learning experiences to develop motivated genetic counselors to meet the needs of an expanding landscape in genetics and genomics. The primary objective of the Master of Science Degree Program in Genetic Counseling is to educate graduate students in the core concepts of human genetics and counseling.

Our focus is to provide students with the appropriate knowledge, experience and mentoring to become competent, sensitive and motivated genetic counselors. This is accomplished through a variety of educational experiences including coursework, clinical training, research project preparation and supplementary activities such as case conferences, grand rounds, journal clubs and seminars. [Learn more](#) about Genetic Counseling and the [National Society of Genetic Counselors](#).

Boston University's medical school and teaching hospital offer access to tremendous resources for clinical experiences, with a diverse patient population, making this [the only program](#) to be located within an academic medical center in New England with a safety net hospital on campus, Boston Medical Center. Students gain experience working with an incredibly diverse patient population, including the underserved and uninsured.

We strive to provide students with experiences that match their clinical and future professional interests. Students have exposure to inter-professional education and teaching opportunities, standard patient simulation experiences and are able to enroll in elective courses through several other BU schools and departments, including the Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine Program and the School of Public Health. Our program encourages collaboration and a supportive environment for which to learn from each other. We work as a team, and work to ensure our students receive training that is also personalized to their interests and future goals.

## Program Highlights

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- The program has received full accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC).
- Courses are delivered at Boston University's Medical Campus in Boston's historic South End, providing a dynamic learning environment and unique clinical training and laboratory research opportunities.

- In addition to being the first program of its kind to be located within an academic medical center in New England, the program is also unique in its inclusion of courses from other graduate programs like Mental Health Counseling & Behavioral Medicine and the School of Public Health
- Fieldwork experiences are offered in a broad range of settings, including Boston Medical Center’s prenatal, pediatric, and cancer genetic clinics. There are also fieldwork opportunities in labs, research, public health, advocacy, and industry
- Students in this program are exposed to more than 100 genetic counselors in Boston’s world-class healthcare settings
- The 48-credit full-time program can be completed in two years and culminates with a Capstone research project
- Those who successfully complete the program will have met the educational requirements to be eligible for Certification by the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC)

## Curriculum

Semester 1	Credits
Professional Issues in Genetic Counseling	3 credits
Embryology, Teratology, and Prenatal Genetics	3 credits
Clinical Applications in Human Genetics	4 credits
Genetic Counseling Seminar	0 credits
Fundamentals of Counseling in Genetics	3 credits
Genetic Counseling Fieldwork I	2 credits

Semester 2	Credits
Genetic Diagnosis and Laboratory Methods	3 credits
Professional Issues in Genetic Counseling	Continued
Clinical Genetics	3 credits

Genetic Counseling Seminar	Continued
Cancer Genetic Counseling	3 credits
Genetic Counseling Fieldwork I	Continued

Summer Semester	Credits
Genetic Counseling Fieldwork II	2 credits

Semester 3	Credits
Metabolic Genetics/ Advanced Risk Assessment	3 credits
Genetic Counseling Seminar	2 credits
Genetic Counseling Fieldwork III	2 credits
Advanced Genetic Counseling	4 credits
Genetic Counseling Research Methods	3 credits
Elective Option	2-4 credits

Semester 4	Credits
Genetic Counseling Seminar	Continued
Genetic Counseling Fieldwork IV	2 credits
Advanced Genetic Counseling	Continued

Social, Cultural and Ethical Issues in Genetics	3 credits
Advanced Topics in Medical Genetics	3 credits

### Electives

- One BU graduate-level course in counseling, public health, and/or education
- Students may choose from a wide variety of related elective courses offered through Graduate Medical Sciences

### Admissions Requirements

You must have a baccalaureate degree and undergraduate coursework in biology, chemistry, biochemistry, genetics, statistics, and psychology. In addition, applicants will need to do the following:

- For international students, submit scores from the TOEFL Examination, unless you received your undergraduate degree at an English speaking institution. IELTS scores can be submitted in place of the TOEFL.
- Submit transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions you have attended.
- Obtain three letters of recommendation.
- Write a personal statement that describes your reasons for pursuing a degree in genetic counseling at Boston University using examples of experiences that have motivated you personally.
- Many professional experiences offer transferable skills to the field of genetic counseling. Some examples of transferable skills include:
  - Advocacy experience
  - Counseling experience
  - Teaching experience
  - Experience in connecting with professionals who work within the field of genetic counseling, such as interviews, webinars, in-person experiences, etc.
  - Research experience (social science based or basic science based)

### Application Timeline

Applications to the program can be submitted online starting in September. In early February, all applicants will be notified about the status of their application. Candidates who are selected for an interview will be scheduled to interview with our program throughout March and April, at which time they will meet with our students and faculty. Applicants are required to register with the National Match System, as per admissions guidelines set forth by the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors to consider an application complete. Match Day occurs at the end of April. To further understand the match process, please see details posted on [www.natmatch.com/gcadmissions](http://www.natmatch.com/gcadmissions).

## Tuition, Financial Aid and Student Resources

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For the most up-to-date information on tuition and fees, visit [www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/admissions/student-financial-services/](http://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/admissions/student-financial-services/).

The Financial Aid Office at Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine is available to assist students identifying sources of financial support and tuition remission, including graduate and research assistantships, fellowships, and federal loans.

The BU Office of Housing Resources provides information regarding housing, transportation, and Boston neighborhoods. For more details, visit [www.bumc.bu.edu/ohr](http://www.bumc.bu.edu/ohr).

## Eligibility

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Although many applicants do apply directly from undergrad, just as many come with several years of working experience prior to pursuing this degree.

## Contact

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**For more information, please contact:**

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<https://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/genetic-counseling/>

## Application Timeline

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BU Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and BU School of Public Health coordinate top-tier graduate programs across health disciplines and now offer a dual degree program for students to earn a Master of Science in Genetic Counseling degree and a Master of Public Health degree in 2.5 years of study altogether.

In working at the Frontline of Medicine at Boston Medical Center, this collaboration highlights the intersection of genetic medicine and the social, political, behavioral, and environmental determinants of population health and healthcare systems.

## Tuition

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In addition to the tuition for the MS in Genetic Counseling degree, tuition for the additional coursework necessary to fulfill degree requirements for the Master's in Public Health is approximately \$67,000 for the 40 incremental credits of coursework.

## Curriculum

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### Prior to the start of classes

- SPH PH700 | Foundations of Public Health (0 cr; online)

### Fall 1 (Students require permission to enroll in >18 credits)

- GMS GC601 | Professional Issues in Genetic Counseling (3 cr)
- GMS GC603 | Embryology, Teratology, and Prenatal Genetics (3 cr)
- GMS GC605 | Clinical Applications in Human Genetics (4 cr)
- GMS GC608 | Fundamentals of Counseling in Genetics (3 cr)
- GMS GC700 | Genetic Counseling Fieldwork (2 cr)
- SPH PH717 | Quantitative Methods for Public Health (4 cr; online/hybrid)

### Spring 1

- GMS GC600 | Genetic Diagnosis and Laboratory Methods (3 cr)
- GMS GC602 | Clinical Genetics (3 cr)
- GMS GC604 | Cancer Genetic Counseling (4 cr)
- SPH PH718 | Leadership and Management in Public Health (4 cr; online/hybrid)

### Summer 1

- GMS GC702 | Genetic Counseling Fieldwork II (2 cr)
- SPH PH719 | Health Systems, Law, and Policy (4 cr; online/hybrid)
- SPH PH720 | Individual, Community, and Population Health (4 cr; online/hybrid)

## Fall 2

- GMS GC606 | Genetic Counseling Seminar (2 cr)
- GMS GC703 | Genetic Counseling Fieldwork III (2 cr)
- GMS GC711| Advanced Genetic Counseling (4 cr)
- GMS GC712 | Metabolic Genetics/ Advanced Risk Assessment (3 cr)
- GMS GC 713 | Genetic Counseling Research Methods (3 cr)
- SPH PH746 | Career PREP (0 cr)
- GMS/SPH | Elective #1

## Spring 2

- GMS GC714 | Advanced Topics in Medical Genetics (3 cr)
- GMS GC716 | Social, Cultural, and Ethical Issues in Genetics (3 cr)
- GMS GC704 | Genetic Counseling Fieldwork IV (2 cr)
- SPH | Functional Specialization Course #1 (4 cr)
- SPH | Functional Specialization Course #2 (4 cr)

*Completion of Master's of Science in Genetic Counseling. Graduates are ABGC certification exam eligible and eligible for genetic counseling licensure as appropriate.*

## Summer 2

- SPH | Functional Specialization Course #3 (4 cr)
- SPH PH976 | Practicum or equivalent (0 cr)

## Fall 3

- SPH | Functional Specialization Course #4 (4 cr)
- SPH | Elective #2 (4 cr)
- SPH PH845 | Integrative Learning Experience (0 cr)