



**VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY**

**Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
Master of Genetic Counseling**

**Program Handbook
Academic Year 2024-25**

Version Date: August 1, 2024

PREFACE

This handbook is intended to provide enrolled students, as well as prospective students and related parties, with important information about the policies and procedures of the Vanderbilt Master of Genetic Counseling (MGC) Program. This handbook is one of several important documents that provide operational guidance to students to assist with their successful progression through the MGC Program. Other documents with policy and procedure information important to students include those listed below (titles of documents below are linked to the online documents). In this document, text that is **shown in blue** is hyperlinked to an external source document or website.

- [Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Catalog](#) – The VUSM Catalog is updated annually and provided online. It includes important policies and other information related to Vanderbilt University, the School of Medicine, and the MGC Program.
- [Vanderbilt University Student Handbook](#) - Vanderbilt University publishes a Student Handbook containing policies and procedures that affect the lives of all Vanderbilt University students, regardless of school or degree program. Content of this document is aligned with that of the MGC Program Handbook (below) and the VUSM Catalog (above).
- [Master of Genetic Counseling Program Handbook \(this document\)](#) – The policies and procedures in the Program Handbook are aligned with Vanderbilt University, VUSM, and program policies that appear in the Catalog, as well as other locations. The purpose of the Program Handbook is to provide more specific details about the program, with a particular focus on operational information and procedures.
- [Vanderbilt University Enrollment Bulletin](#) – The bulletin is intended as a single point-of- entry for students to access policies and procedures important to their Vanderbilt University student lives. This resource is most helpful for accessing university-level resources. For areas where relevant information is provided via VUSM- or program-level documents/outlets, the bulletin makes references to appropriate resources.
- [Program Website](#) – All VUSM programs maintain websites containing information important for students, faculty, and administrators. Some programs also maintain program handbooks with similar/complementary information. The purpose of these outlets is to provide day-to-day information about the programs, with a focus on practical information and procedures.
- The [Explore VUSM | Vanderbilt University](#) provides a single point-of-entry for all VUSM students to locate VUSM-wide policies and procedures.

Important Notice to Students:

All students enrolled in the Vanderbilt University MGC Program are bound by all Vanderbilt University, School of Medicine, and MGC Program policies. By enrolling in this program, each student acknowledges their responsibility to abide by and adhere to all institutional and programmatic policies and procedures. Students therefore have the responsibility of being familiar with the policies and procedures described in the School of Medicine Catalog, the Vanderbilt University Student Handbook, and the MGC Program Handbook, as well as on institutional and program websites.

Where appropriate, links to University policy are provided. Many of the policies are listed in the VUSM 2024-25 catalog at [The School of Medicine Catalog \(vanderbilt.edu\)](#).

Welcome!

The Master of Genetic Counseling (MGC) program is one built on a foundation of medical education excellence, broad clinical expertise, and leadership in genetics research at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Support for this program is enthusiastic and far-reaching on the campus.

We want your experience to be one of intellectual challenge and academic support. The Genetic Counseling faculty began work on the program in 2015. This program has been developed and implemented by genetic counselors to train leaders in our field and increase access to genetic services. By working with Dr. Nancy Cox, Director of the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute, we gathered support from the Departments of Pediatrics, Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology along with the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center and Personalized Medicine at Vanderbilt to launch of the MGC degree program. In 2022, the dedication and excellence of our faculty and students was recognized by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling by awarding us full accreditation.

Our students are the future of the field, and we strive to build an environment of support and academic rigor for you to thrive. Our students have immense opportunity both as students and as alumni. We welcome your input and critical evaluation of the program to improve the learning process for all. We look forward to working with you to build a legacy of excellence in the field of genetic counseling.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha E. Dudek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martha Dudek, MS, CGC
Program Director

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| PREFACE | 2 |
| Important Notice to Students | 2 |
| I. INTRODUCTION..... | 5 |
| II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS | 7 |
| III. STUDENT ASSESSMENT..... | 9 |
| <u>A.</u> GRADING | 9 |
| <u>B.</u> PRACTICA ASSESSMENT..... | 10 |
| IV. STUDENT SUPPORT AND ADVISORY SERVICES | 12 |
| V. PROGRESS AND PROMOTION..... | 12 |
| VI. TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCIAL AID..... | 12 |
| VII. ENROLLMENT..... | 12 |
| VIII. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS | 12 |
| IX. OTHER STUDENT LIFE RESOURCES AND POLICIES | 16 |
| X. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT | 19 |
| XI. MGC ABBREVIATIONS..... | 20 |

I. INTRODUCTION

As an international leader in genetics, Vanderbilt recognizes the need to offer a program of excellence in clinical genetics and genetic counseling research to meet the demand for genetic counselors. The Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling (MGC) program was proposed and approved by the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the VU Board of Trust in 2017, under the leadership of Martha Dudek, Program Director. The MGC degree is awarded by Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, with academic administrative oversight provided by the VUSM Office of Health Sciences Education. The program is offered in collaboration with the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute of Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

A. INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM MISSION AND VISION

1. Vanderbilt University Mission, Goals, and Values

Vanderbilt University is a center for scholarly research, informed and creative teaching, and service to the community and society at large. Vanderbilt will uphold the highest standards and be a leader in the:

1. Quest for new knowledge through scholarship.
2. Dissemination of knowledge through teaching and outreach.
3. Creative experimentation of ideas.

In pursuit of these goals, Vanderbilt values most highly:

4. Intellectual freedom that supports open inquiry.
5. Equality, compassion, and excellence in all endeavors.

2. Vanderbilt University Medical Center Mission

Through the exceptional capabilities and caring spirit of its people, Vanderbilt University Medical Center will lead in improving the healthcare of individuals and communities regionally, nationally, and internationally. We will combine our transformative learning programs and compelling discoveries to provide distinctive personalized care.

3. Vanderbilt Genetics Institute Mission

The mission of the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute is to promote genomic discovery and advance understanding of the human genome. Application of new discoveries will ultimately translate into improved patient care through better diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of human disease.

4. Vanderbilt Master of Genetic Counseling Program Mission

The mission of the Vanderbilt MGC Program is to graduate diverse genetic counseling leaders in the field of genetics and genomic medicine. The Vanderbilt MGC Program is dedicated to the matriculation of diverse graduate students and empowering them to succeed in the expanding field of genetics, genomics, and personalized medicine. This will, in turn, provide increased access to care for health care consumers.

5. Vanderbilt Master of Genetic Counseling Program Vision

The vision of the Vanderbilt MGC Program is to be on the forefront of genetics and genetic services research, to create a nurturing environment to foster genetic counseling training, and to nest the program in a strong, connected academic and medical community.

B. INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

1. Institutional Accreditation

Vanderbilt University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097
(404) 679-4500 sacscoc.org

2. Program Accreditation

The Vanderbilt University Master of Genetic Counseling program has been granted full accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) effective November 2022. Additional information may be found on the ACGC website at gceducation.org and on the VUSM website at medschool.vanderbilt.edu/mgc.

ACGC
1660 International Drive
Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102 USA
(703) 506-7667 gceducation.org

C. PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

- [Advisory Board](#)
- [Program Leadership, Faculty, & Staff Members](#)
- [Standing Committees](#)

D. DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS

Directly Responsible Individuals (DRIs) are defined as those program faculty with whom students should be in contact regarding questions or informational needs they might have. The primary contact for any issue, as listed below, should always be contacted first. In the event the primary contact is not available, the second contact should be contacted next. If the second contact is not available, the third contact should be contacted.

Appropriate DRIs on various topics are listed in the table below.

| Concern or Issue | Primary Contact | 2nd Contact | 3rd Contact |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Academic courses | Course Director | Academic Advisor | PD or APD |
| Practica/Fieldwork | Lead Supervisor | Assistant Director of Fieldwork | PD or APD |
| Research | Faculty Research Advisor | Research Review Committee Chair | PD or APD |

PD = MGC Program Director

APD = MGC Assistant Program Director

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A. VUSM HONOR CODE AND COUNCIL

All students enrolled in a VUSM program must abide by the VUSM Honor Code. Full information about the [VUSM Honor System](#) is available in the [School of Medicine Catalog](#).

B. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

C. CURRICULUM

1. Rotation Requirements

Rotations are an integral part of training genetic counseling professionals. During the 21-month Vanderbilt University MGC program, students engage in rotations that are primarily focused on clinical experiences, as required by Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) Standards and Guidelines. Through these rotations, MGC students gain the training and experience foundation necessary for a career in genetic counseling.

Each student completes 10, five-week rotations with a possible 11th rotation if necessary to acquire additional clinical cases in a core area. The term “rotation” references the area a student is in for the designated number of weeks. Rotation 1 occurs between October and January of the first year, as assigned, and consists of five weeks, three weeks of clinical observation and two weeks of didactic work. Rotations 2-10 are consecutive for five weeks. Rotations are focused on building clinical skills. The term “practicum” is used to describe all the rotations completed in a given semester. For example, in the spring semester of the first year, a student will complete two five-week rotations as part of Genetic Counseling Practicum I (GC7515). However, students vary as to which of the rotation areas they have in Practicum I (e.g., cancer and prenatal vs. general/pediatrics and prenatal).

Rotation 1:

Starting in the fall of the first year, each student begins Rotation 1. Rotation 1 consists of two didactic weeks and three clinical weeks in the following areas: Prenatal, Pediatrics, and Cancer. This time serves as an introduction to the clinical areas in which students will later spend more time. Since each student is required to participate in all rotations, the specific order in which students complete the five rotations will vary.

These introductory rotations are outlined on the [MGC website](#).

Rotations 2- 10:

Starting the spring semester of the first year, students begin a sequence of 5-week rotations. Students spend the 10 weeks in each of the four core areas: Prenatal, General Genetics (adult and pediatric), Cancer (public health and lab/industry). In addition, students complete five weeks in a lab/industry setting, public health (i.e., Shade Tree Clinic) and one rotation of their choice (Elective). These five-week rotations are outlined on the [MGC website](#). Students complete most rotations at Vanderbilt University Medical Center sites. Students interested in rotating at a non- VUMC site may consider doing so, typically as their elective.

All external rotation sites must be fully vetted and approved by the Assistant Director of Fieldwork (ADF) and PD prior to any student beginning a rotation at that location. Any student rotating at a non-VUMC site must also be in good academic standing to attend the rotation.

Elective Rotation Guidelines:

MGC students have the opportunity to pursue an elective rotation in their second year of training. Elective rotations must be approved by the Program Leadership (ADF and PD) and will be overseen by the ADF. If the student is on target in their skills acquisition and accumulation of cases, the rotation site may include non-core cases and/or non-clinical experiences. However, all elective rotation experiences must contribute to the overall depth and experience of the genetic counseling training. Students may also return to a previous site for a more in-depth experience.

The general process for identifying and selecting an elective are as follows:

- February of First Year: The ADF introduces elective topics and ideas.
- March/April of First Year: Students work independently with the ADF and/or their Academic Advisors to identify/explore specialties, clinical opportunities, etc. and discuss ideas with the ADF via meetings or emails.
 - Note: Students who want to do an off-site rotation must work with the ADF as soon as possible.
- Summer of First Year: Students solidify elective sites.
- Fall of Second Year: Students create an elective rotation proposal.

Students must submit an elective rotation proposal to the ADF that describes the elective, the students' goals, ACGC competencies, and other details as outlined by the ADF. Final proposals are due at least 5 weeks prior to the start of the anticipated rotation.

Research Requirement:

Additional information about research logistics, timeline, forms, and resources are provided to student during coursework in the first year via the course management system, [BrightSpace](#), and in the MGC Research Handbook

2. Supplementary Educational Activities

MGC students are required to participate in several supplementary educational activities including, but not limited to, case conferences, clinical review meetings, journal clubs, as well as community and professional presentations. Students participate in supplementary educational activities both during and outside classroom/rotation hours. Students are expected to log supplemental fieldwork/educational experiences which are outside the classroom in New Innovations. Participation in these activities is tracked and considered in the overall assessment of student academic performance.

III. STUDENT ASSESSMENT

A. GRADING

Students' assignments for courses and other educational activities are outlined in the course syllabus provided by each course director. Grading rubrics are used to grade written assignments and projects. Students are provided with these grading rubrics at the commencement of the assignment. Students are able to view their performance on assessments online through the course management system, [BrightSpace](#). It is the responsibility of the student to notify course directors if they are unable to see their grades or progress in BrightSpace.

Students should direct all questions and technical issues to the Vanderbilt BrightSpace Support Team (brightspace@vanderbilt.edu). **Students should only use Chrome browser when using BrightSpace and follow all recommended guidelines about use of Brightspace provided during MGC orientation.** Technical difficulties are not an automatic exception to due dates or requirements. Students are advised to save copies of material before submitting and document any difficulties by saving screen shots and/or emailing the course director as evidence of submission. (Email does not substitute for submission.)

Due dates for all assignments (including discussion boards) and assessments are published in BrightSpace. Unless otherwise specified by course director, work must be submitted by 11:59 PM Central Standard Time on the due date to be eligible for full credit. Students are highly encouraged to submit in advance to ensure timely submission. Prompt submission of assignments for assessment allows the instructor to provide guidance and timely feedback.

Assignments and discussion forum postings/replies submitted after the due date will receive a 10% grade deduction. For example, assignments which would have been rated A will be graded as B, or instead of 100%, the grade will be 90%. Work submitted after two days past the original due date will not be accepted and no credit given.

Course directors may adjust these policies for their course and will describe any changes in syllabus. Students are urged to communicate with course directors in advance of the due date if they are unable to meet course expectations, including assignments. It is the course director's discretion to extend deadlines for extenuating circumstance or in case of an emergency. Emergencies are defined as anything which is serious and unexpected. Emergencies cannot be written on the calendar in advance. Examples of emergencies include heart attacks, car accidents, a serious health crisis of the student or in the student's immediate family. Examples of non-emergencies include family weddings, vacations, conferences, or any other event which can be anticipated.

Students wishing to request accommodation under the of the American with Disabilities Act, should refer to the section, "[Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)," in the VUSM Catalog for more information.

Coursework Incomplete: In the event that a student is unable to fulfill all the requirements of a course due to incomplete assignments, missing an exam, or is not able to attend required course meetings, a grade of incomplete will be assigned. Students have up to one year from the original course end date to complete their coursework, unless the course in

question is a prerequisite for subsequent courses, in which case it may need to be completed sooner. To facilitate the completion of coursework, students will work in partnership with the course instructor(s), their academic advisor, and the Academic Progress and Promotions Committee to develop a plan for completion that details the outstanding requirements, a timeline for their completion, and the methods by which the student intends to fulfill these requirements. Enrollment in future courses may be contingent upon the discretion of the Academic Progress and Promotions Committee, particularly if the course with the incomplete grade is a prerequisite for those future courses.

B. PRACTICA ASSESSMENT

1. Acquisition of Clinical Skills

Students are assessed on their clinical skills before, during and at the end of each rotation. These assessments and the timeline are reviewed during Practica Orientation (aka Bootcamp) prior to starting rotations. Practica information is also shared with the student in the MGC course found in [BrightSpace](#).

2. Tracking of Rotation Experiences

To ensure adequate exposure and training, the ACGC requires that each student maintain records of all rotation experiences seen as part of the MGC Program. These experiences included both clinical cases and supplemental fieldwork experiences (e.g., attending a conference, volunteering work, non-core clinical cases, etc.). Accurate tracking of all experiences is important for students and MGC program.

The MGC program uses New Innovations to track and manage these data, as well as student and supervisor evaluations. Students are trained on how to use New Innovations for tracking and data management as part of Genetic Counseling Practicum I (GC7615). New Innovations allows students to have restricted access to only their experiences while facilitating review of all the data by the ADF and Program Leadership in aggregate and individually.

Students receive evaluations by their lead supervisor at the end and mid-point of each rotation. These evaluations are shared with students, the ADF, and Program Leadership (as needed). The ADF tracks student evaluations to ensure that students are adequately progressing in clinical and professional skill development. Students anonymously evaluate supervisors and the clinic after each rotation. These evaluations are reviewed by the ADF and Program Leadership (as needed). The ADF shares de-identified, aggregate feedback with the supervisors and clinics on an annual basis to ensure ongoing improvement in the clinical experience and supervisor skills.

Formal reviews ADF/Program Leadership are scheduled twice during the MGC Program:

- Mid-point Review (aka Transition meeting) – This meeting is with the ADF (or other program leadership) and typically occurs in August before the start of the 2nd year of classes. The student and ADF formally review prior rotation experiences in the Spring and Summer semesters of the 1st year, student goals and strengths,

- current case logs, practice competencies, and what to focus on for the 2nd year.
- **Graduation Readiness** – This meeting is with PD or other program leadership and typically three months prior to graduation. The student will be given instructions on how to organize their fieldwork experiences and draft a logbook as required by the ABGC and ACGC standards. Program leadership will review fieldwork experiences, coursework and research progress to assess progress towards graduation requirements as outlined in the VUSM catalog.

After the Graduation Readiness meeting, the PD will determine if additional fieldwork is needed in a particular clinical area or remediation is necessary. Remediation is the process of bolstering skills to ensure readiness in a professional genetic counseling position. If needed, a plan will be developed with the student and their Academic Advisor for an 11th clinical rotation to ensure the student meets ACGC standards for graduation. This determination may also be made sooner if concerns are raised by Academic Progress and Promotion Committee meetings during the academic year.

3. Practica Grades

The Practica 1-4 classes and Pre-Practicum (GC7510, GC7520, GC7525, GC7525, GC7530) are graded using the evaluations during each rotation and participation in Case Conference. Individual rotations do not receive a grade. Grades for Practica 1-4 and Pre-Practicum include Pass, Fail, and Incomplete.

Practica Incomplete: A student will receive an Incomplete when faculty are unable to assess the student's work in Practica and/or there is missing work for >50% of the time in clinic due to any circumstance. An Incomplete in Practica is expected to be converted to Pass or Fail within one (1) year of the Incomplete based on the student's ability to make up the work. Should a student receive an Incomplete, the make-up work and timelines will be provided to the student after the APPC meets to evaluate the student's progress.

4. CELA Attendance Policy

Attendance in CELA (the Center for Experiential Learning and Assessment) for simulated cases is a mandatory part of Pre-Practicum and Practica courses 1-4 and is expected to be done in person. Faculty provide students with the dates in advance so students can make arrangements to attend during these dates and times. Unexcused absences will result in grade of either an Incomplete or Failure of the Practica class during which the student has the unexcused absence.

Excused Absences: If a student has a personal or family emergency or sickness, the student is required to contact the faculty leading CELA, the Asst. Director of Fieldwork, or other Program Leadership as soon as possible. A make-up time and date will be arranged, if possible. Alternatively, a case outline will be requested.

Unexcused Absences: All other absences, except those noted, above will be considered unexcused and the student may receive an Incomplete or Failing grade for the course during which CELA occurs. This will be factored into the student's Promotion Decision of the APPC for that semester. Examples of unexcused absences include personal travel, personal appointments, etc.

Switching Times for a Case: Students can request a specific time slot from the CELA coordinator, Jill Braddock-Watson (not the MGC faculty), two or more weeks in

advance, if there is an unavoidable academic conflict with the original CELA time. These will be considered and accommodated on a case-by-case basis; however, granting these requests is not guaranteed.

Remote Attendance: CELA cases are expected to be performed in person. Remote attendance is possible if the student is doing an off-site rotation and physically located off campus. The exception is the final two CELA cases, which must be performed in person.

C. RESEARCH PROJECT ASSESSMENT

D. STUDENT GRADING GRIEVANCES

IV. STUDENT SUPPORT AND ADVISORY SERVICES

V. PROGRESS AND PROMOTION

VI. TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCIAL AID

VII. ENROLLMENT

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine (VUSM) policy pertaining to Enrollment, Course Registration and Student Status is found in the [School of Medicine Catalog](#).

A. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

B. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

Newly admitted students, as well as continuing students, receive communications from the VUSM Office of Enrollment Services and the MGC Program regarding procedures for course registration prior to the start of each term.

C. ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

VIII. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In addition to the Student Care Network and other useful student resources found on the Life at Vanderbilt page of the [VUSM Catalog](#), MGC faculty members and those in the program leadership are available as resources to students to discuss challenges related to work-life balance and other stressors that can accompany launching a new career, as well as life in general. Faculty members are trained during their faculty orientation about the limits to this professional role and how to recognize when students may be in need of more specialized resources, such as those provided through VU student health or the Title IX office. Faculty members are also trained to make referrals to available resources, whether doing so directly or by providing resources to students who wish to self-refer.

A. ACCESS, TITLE IX, AND NON-DISCRIMINATION/NON-HARASSMENT

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the MGC Program comply with all aspects of the [Vanderbilt University Nondiscrimination Statement](#). If a student or faculty member

believes that a member of the Vanderbilt community has engaged in prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, they should contact the Title IX Office and/or the Equal Opportunity and Access Office, as described below. If the offense is criminal in nature, they may file a report with Vanderbilt University Police Department.

1. VU Title IX Office

The Vanderbilt University Title IX Office (vanderbilt.edu/title-ix) and/or the Vanderbilt University Equal Opportunity and Access Office (vanderbilt.edu/eoa) investigates allegations of prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving members of the Vanderbilt community. This includes allegations of sexual misconduct and other forms of power-based personal violence. The Title IX Office also facilitates interim accommodations for students impacted by sexual misconduct and power-based personal violence.

2. Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (vanderbilt.edu/diversity/) is responsible for advocating for institutional change, working with university stakeholders to set goals and institutionalize accountability, and ensuring that equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts are coordinated throughout Vanderbilt University for students, faculty, and staff.

3. Religious Reasonable Accommodation for Students

VUSM offers its students reasonable accommodation for religious practices. Accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis. Students wishing to request reasonable accommodation should initiate a request by meeting with the MGC PD. As part of the request process, the student will be asked to complete the Religious Reasonable Accommodation Request Form, found under the “*Religious Accommodations*” tab on the VU Equal Opportunity and Access Office website (vanderbilt.edu/eoa). The submission of this form will begin an interactive process that will include the student, the PD, the Equal Opportunity and Access Office, and relevant parties as Vanderbilt deems necessary (e.g., course faculty). On average, the process takes at least two weeks to complete; reasonable accommodation arrangements are not retroactive. Please note that requests for accommodation must be renewed annually.

4. Services for Students with Disabilities

Vanderbilt is committed to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act as it strives to be an inclusive community for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation for any type of disability are encouraged to contact Student Access Services (vanderbilt.edu/student-access).

5. Sexual Misconduct and Intimate Partner Violence

Vanderbilt University is committed to equal opportunity and to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all members of the University community, guests, and visitors. The Vanderbilt University Student Handbook includes a [Sexual Misconduct and Other Forms of Power-Based Personal Violence policy](#). Full information about Vanderbilt University policies and student resources related to sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence may be found on this website. Students are instructed on this policy when they are oriented to the program. Students who experience violations of this policy are encouraged to report such incidents.

B. STUDENT HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES

The VU MGC Program considers the health and well-being of its students a top priority. Toward that end, students have multiple health-related services at their disposal through Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University Medical Center and other organizations in the Nashville area. Students may easily self-refer to these resources or they may be referred to them by MGC faculty and/or leadership. Students are introduced to the range of health services at orientation and at an update at the beginning of the second year.

Faculty members are educated about resources and program policies when they join the program (and annually thereafter). They are also trained at these times about the importance of timely access and/or referral of students to appropriate support services.

1. Health Services Referral Policy

Maintaining student privacy around health issues, some of which may be particularly sensitive, is very important to the VU MGC program. In the event an MGC faculty member or program leader provides information to a student on an informal basis about potentially helpful health resources, that is not documented in any way in the student record, nor is the referral necessarily shared with the PD.

There may be very rare instances where a Promotion Committee recommends formally that a student avail him or herself of health resources in order to obtain support thought to be beneficial to the student's success in the academic program. In those cases, that recommendation would be documented formally in the Promotion Committee findings letter to the student and become part of the student's academic record.

2. Student Care Network

The Student Care Network is a holistic network of services and resources pertaining to health and wellness available to all Vanderbilt University students. Primary offices include the [Office of Student Care Coordination](#), the [University Counseling Center](#), the [Student Health Center](#), and the [Center for Student Wellbeing](#). Students also have access to a wide range of additional on-campus and community resources through the Student Care Network—from the Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center to the Project Safe Center and to a variety of community providers. To facilitate finding resources, students may refer to the [Student Care Network website](#).

3. Student Health Insurance

All degree-seeking students registered for 4 or more hours at Vanderbilt are required to have adequate hospitalization insurance coverage. The University offers a sickness and accident insurance plan that is designed to provide hospital, surgical, and major medical benefits. A brochure explaining the limits, exclusions, and benefits of insurance coverage is available at gallagherstudent.com. Additional information, including health insurance waiver, is available at the [Student Care Network website](#).

C. STUDENT SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

1. Vanderbilt University Safety and Emergency Preparedness

The Vanderbilt University Police Department provides several services and programs to members of the Vanderbilt community.

VandySafe

Vanderbilt University Public Safety provides VandySafe, previously SafeVU, for download on your smartphone through the [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#) stores.

Educational and Assistance Programs

The Crime Prevention Unit of Vanderbilt University Police Department offers programs addressing issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence, workplace violence, personal safety, RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) classes, and victim assistance.

Annual Security Report

The Vanderbilt University Annual Security Report is published each year to provide the Vanderbilt University community with information on security-related services offered by the university and campus crime statistics in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and the Tennessee College and University Security Information Act.

This booklet is prepared with information provided by the Nashville Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Student Athletics, Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of Housing and Residential Education, and the Vanderbilt University Police Department. It summarizes university programs, policies, and procedures designed to enhance personal safety for everyone at Vanderbilt.

2. Vanderbilt University Medical Center Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) is the primary clinical location for MGC students. As a result, all Vanderbilt University (VU) students participating in clinical learning activities at VUMC are provided instruction on VUMC policies and procedures at the outset of their clinical activities, and they are required to be familiar with and follow policies at all times. VU students, VU clinical faculty and all VUMC staff participate in comprehensive emergency preparedness and safety training as part of the orientation/new employee onboarding process.

These modules cover a number of topics, including:

- **Hazard Communications**
- **Fire and Electrical Safety**
- **Emergency Preparedness**
- **Ergonomics**
- **Accident and Injury Prevention**
- **Infection Prevention**

All VU students, VU faculty members, and VUMC staff members are required to complete emergency preparedness refresher training on an annual basis.

Training modules are housed on VU and VUMC's employee online learning management system, Learning Exchange. Students are given access to Learning Exchange from the time of their matriculation at VU. Learning Exchange is used by students, faculty, and staff to take their initial and annual emergency preparedness training, as well as annual safety refresher training. Learning Exchange users use their VUMC VUNet ID to log into the system, so their records are secure and private. Learning Exchange records each user's module completion date and the user score for

each module (numerical, pass, or fail, depending on the module).

In addition to safety modules, students, faculty, and staff have access at all times to VUMC Emergency Operations Quick Reference Guides, which provide easily accessed information for use during emergencies. The Quick Reference Guides are based on the content of the VUMC Safety & Emergency Operations Manual. These Guides are found throughout VUMC and are available on the VUMC website (as part of the VUMC Safety & Emergency Operations Manual; <https://www.vumc.org/emergency/>). The Quick Reference Guides also provide an opportunity for each unit to document location-specific guidance for emergency situations.

Students, faculty and staff also receive identification badge-sized reference cards that include key emergency codes and response procedures for quick reference. These cards clip onto their VUMC identification card holders, which they wear at all times when they are on the VUMC campus.

In the event of an emergency, VUMC uses various methods of communication to alert students, staff and faculty that the organization has activated an Emergency Operations status. Student, faculty and student notification include mass messaging via [AlertVU](#) and announcements over VUMC building public address systems. A VUMC Emergency Operations Center is opened, and communications take place throughout the emergency situation, as well as after the situation, in order to provide appropriate guidance to the VUMC community. Minimum communication to be provided includes the nature of the emergency, any specific codes (from VUMC codes list) pertaining to the emergency, the location of the emergency and emergency action plans that are to be activated, if any.

Students are trained and advised by supervisors to report immediately to the VUMC Occupational Health Clinic (OHC) (or the VUMC Emergency Department, if exposure occurs after OHC hours) in the event they are exposed to potentially infectious materials. For health care needs not directly related to clinical education activities, students have access to the [Vanderbilt Student Health Center](#), as well as VUMC clinics, with the majority of clinics and inpatient sites being within walking distance of where classroom and clinical learning activities take place.

IX. OTHER STUDENT LIFE RESOURCES AND POLICIES

A. LIBRARY

All MGC students have access and privileges to the [Vanderbilt University Jean and Alexander Heard Library System](#), a system of eight on-VU campus library buildings, including the [Eskind Family Biomedical Library and Learning Center](#) (EBL). Vanderbilt University's libraries are among the top research libraries in the nation, home to more than eight million items, including print publications, microfilm items, and digital collections.

EBL collects and provides access to materials to support the teaching, research, and service missions of Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. EBL's comprehensive biomedical and health sciences collection is comprised of 15,000 print volumes and more than 20,000 electronic databases, journals, and books. The Interlibrary Loan/Document Delivery service can assist with finding and acquiring items not available in the Vanderbilt Library collection. Research assistance and instruction for current

students, staff, and faculty is available in-person, or electronically through Skype for Business.

Each student has access to numerous professional texts and journals through electronic Eskin Family Biomedical Library resources, a full Digital Library accessible with a VUNetID and password, at <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/biomedical/>. These resources are accessible via the campus network, from workstations and circulating laptops in campus libraries, as well as via authenticated access (VUNetID and e-password) from off campus. The library has wireless network access throughout the facility, 12 desktop computers, six laptops available for checkout, two multi- function printers, and 3- D printing.

During the MGC program orientation students are provided training about how to access library physical and online resources. In addition, periodic training sessions for students and faculty members provide information about online research techniques to enable the fullest access to available resources.

B. EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

1. VUSM Student Computing Policies

2. WiFi

All administrative, clinical, and classroom areas used by MGC Program students have access to WiFi internet free of charge. Secure access to VU WiFi networks, VUMC WiFi networks and VUMC clinical workstations (located in patient care areas) is provided through the student's VUNet ID and password, a unique identifier assigned by the institution to ensure privacy of student materials, as well as clinical information systems. Students are provided access only to systems required for their use as students in the MGC Program. All Light Hall classrooms have overhead digital projectors and WiFi access. The VUMC Office of Support and Media Services, located on the 4th floor of Light Hall, provides comprehensive A/V equipment resources and personnel support to educators and students.

3. Brightspace

Brightspace is Vanderbilt University's primary course management system, providing a core set of digital tools designed to support teaching and learning across campus. This [website](#) provides information about Brightspace to Vanderbilt faculty, staff, and students. Orientation to Brightspace will be provided during MGC onboarding.

C. MGC STUDENT SPACE

The MGC student room is located within the Vanderbilt Genetics Institute Suite in Light Hall Room 507. This space offers students confidential phone space, secure storage for possessions, desk space for work needs, Wi-Fi for computers, and a reference library on genetic counseling. It has access to a copier, fax, printer, coffee maker, refrigerator, and bathrooms.

Each rotation site provides a designated area in which students may work. While in some cases, this space is private; in many cases it is shared with other professionals (client meeting spaces are private, however). Students should ask the Lead Supervisor about available student workspace on the first day of rotation. Students may also use common study areas in any of the nine libraries on campus. The Eskin Family Biomedical Library is located next

door to Light Hall and has study rooms that can be reserved by VUSM students and faculty members.

In addition, each MGC student is assigned a locker. The lockers are on the 4th floor of Light Hall, west side corridor, south end. Students are notified of their locker assignments during orientation. Students are responsible for providing their own locks for lockers. In the unlikely event of a broken water pipe, supply or drain - or other emergency, plant services may not be able to contact, or even attempt to contact, individual or group assignees before removal of lockers or sections of lockers. In such an instance, plant services may destructively remove locks and empty locker contents to expedite the removal of the lockers and expose the service lines located behind. Past visits by dignitaries have required the inspecting of individual and groups of lockers for security purposes.

Again, a locker may be accessed without prior notification and student-provided locks may be destroyed during lock removal.

D. VUMC DRESS CODE

E. STUDENT GRIEVANCES

Vanderbilt University, the School of Medicine and the Master of Genetic Counseling program all take very seriously concerns and grievances that students may have during their time enrolled at Vanderbilt. In order to best address areas of student concern, specialized policies and processes exist for different types of grievances, and students are introduced to these pathways during their program orientation. Information about many of these avenues for reporting and expressing concerns is contained in this Program Handbook, including grading grievances, appealing probation and dismissal decisions, and concerns about mistreatment, harassment, and discrimination. [The Vanderbilt University Student Handbook](#) also provides information about how to register complaints and grievances to university administration in the event a suitable resolution to a concern is not found at the school level.

F. STUDENT COMPLIANCE

1. Criminal Background Checks

Every student enrolling in the MGC Program is required to undergo a criminal background check prior to matriculation. An email with instructions is sent to admitted students by Certiphi Screening Inc., at the preferred email address provided by the applicant during the application process. The cost of the criminal background check is covered by student tuition. Students are advised to review any potential criminal record concerns with the relevant PD prior to deciding to complete the background check. In the event an adverse criminal history report is returned, it is reviewed by the PD, and the Dean or his designee may also be consulted. Decisions regarding non-admission of students deemed unfit due to the information in criminal background reports are final.

2. Health and Immunization Requirements

The State of Tennessee requires certain immunizations for all students on university

campuses. As such, Vanderbilt University will block student registration for those who are not in compliance with the requirements. The requirements include:

- Varicella vaccine (two injections) is required for all students who have not had documented chickenpox history. Positive titer results are also accepted.
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (2 injections) for all incoming students
- Positive titer results are also accepted.

The Student Health Center requires all incoming students to complete a Health Questionnaire that includes further information regarding the state-mandated vaccinations, as well as information on other strongly recommended vaccinations. Information regarding this Health Questionnaire is communicated to students by email after admission to Vanderbilt University. This Health Questionnaire must be returned to the Student Health Center by May 15 with vaccination information. Students may visit this [website](#) in order to access more information regarding the immunization requirements and information on how to upload their documentation via the secure student health portal.

3. Mandatory Student Training Requirements/Compliance

Students participate in VUMC training modules related to patient safety, hygiene practices, professional conduct, etc., at the beginning of their enrollment and at certain intervals during enrollment. Required modules include:

- Safety Training – Hazard communication, fire/electrical safety, OSHA requirements, emergency preparedness, ergonomics, accident and injury prevention
- Standards of Conduct
- HIPAA Regulations (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)
- Cyber Security Training
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Infection Prevention

Training modules are housed on VU and VUMC's employee online learning management system, Learning Exchange. Students are given access to Learning Exchange from the time of their matriculation at VU. Learning Exchange records each user's module completion date and the user score for each module (numerical, pass, or fail, depending on the module).

X. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Each MGC student must participate in every MGC developed program evaluation survey. Students are encouraged to contact the MGC PD, as well as any other program leaders and faculty, to offer program improvement suggestions or to express concerns about student protections in this process.

XI. MGC ABBREVIATIONS

- ABGC: American Board of Genetic Counseling
- ACGC: Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling
- ACMG: American College of Medical Genetics
- ADF: Assistant Director of Fieldwork
- APD: Assistant Program Director
- APPC: Academic Progress and Promotion Committee
- ASHG: American Society of Human Genetics
- DRI: Directly Responsible Individuals
- EOA: Equal Opportunity and Access
- EBL: Eskind Family Biomedical Library and Learning Center
- FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- GARD: Genetic and Rare Diseases
- GC: Genetic Counselor
- GINA: Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act
- GPA: Grade Point Average
- HCC: Hereditary Cancer Clinic
- IRB: Institutional Review Board
- LCGC: Licensed and Certified Genetic Counselor
- MFM: Maternal Fetal Medicine
- MGC: Master of Genetic Counseling
- NHGRI: The National Human Genome Research Institute
- NBS: Newborn Screening
- NORDD: National Organization for Rare Diseases
- NSGC: National Society of Genetic Counselors
- OHSE: Office of Health Science Education
- OMIM: Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man
- OMMBID: Online Metabolic & Molecular Bases of Inherited Disease
- PD: Program Director
- PIC: Program Implementation Committee
- PCC: Psychological and Counseling Center
- RRC: Research Review Committee
- SAS: Student Access Services
- TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language
- UDN: Undiagnosed Disease Network
- VU: Vanderbilt University
- VUMC: Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- VUPD: Vanderbilt University Police Department
- VUSM: Vanderbilt University School of Medicine