

ACGC Practice Based Competency (PBC) Revision

At the request of the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), a PBC Review Task Force was convened to assess whether or not to include language that more explicitly states that an entry-level genetic counselor graduating from an ACGC-accredited program has the education and training to order genetics-related laboratory testing. The request for this revision came to ACGC from the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) to support its advocacy efforts with regards to state licensure and federal recognition as independent healthcare providers. The PBC Review Taskforce strongly recommended that the ACGC revise competency Domain 1, Number 4 to explicitly state that an entry-level genetic counselor graduating from an ACGC-accredited program has the education and training to order genetic testing.

Announcement of PBC Revision:

The following revisions (italicized and underlined) to the competency Domain 1, Number 4 have been approved by the ACGC Board of Directors. The revisions are meant to broadly encompass testing, both molecular and non-molecular, and to include explicit language related to ordering of laboratory tests.

ACGC Practice Based Competency (PBC) Approved Change:

PBC Text:

4. Identify, assess, order, facilitate, and integrate genetic/genomic testing in genetic counseling practice (including molecular and non-molecular testing that directly impacts assessment of inherited risk).

a) Investigate the availability, analytic validity, clinical validity, and clinical utility of screening, diagnostic and predictive genetic/genomic tests.

b) Evaluate and assess the most appropriate laboratory and test based on the clinical situation.

c) Identify and discuss the potential benefits, risks, limitations and costs of genetic/genomic testing.

d) Coordinate, facilitate, and execute the ordering of appropriate genetic/genomic testing for the client.

e) Interpret the clinical implications of genetic/genomic test reports.

f) Recommend and coordinate additional testing and appropriate referrals based upon test results.

g) Recognize and differentiate specific considerations relevant to genetic versus genomic and clinical versus research testing in terms of the informed consent process, results disclosure, institutional review board (IRB) guidelines, and clinical decision-making.

Rationale:

The PBC Review Task Force approached this review by gathering both practice-driven and education-driven evidence:

- A. Practice-Driven Assessments & Findings:
 - 1. Summarized existing literature pertaining to ordering genetic testing within the context of providing genetic counseling.
 - 2. Reviewed ordering practices and scope among allied-health professional peers.
 - 3. Reviewed existing and proposed legislation related to genetic counselor licensure, including explicit support or opposition to test ordering: Several states allow genetic counselors to order genetic testing.
 - 4. Assessed current state of genetic counselors' test ordering practices from PSS data

- B. Education-Driven Assessments & Findings:
 - 1. Surveyed GC Graduate programs leadership regarding current curriculum related to test ordering to determine if and how this proposed revision would impact programs.
 - 2. Assessed the current certification exam to determine how questions assess test ordering.

Implications for Graduate Education:

The “Practice-Based Competencies for Genetic Counselors” form the basis for educational outcomes in graduate genetic counselor education. They are designed to reflect competencies that genetic counselors are expected to achieve by the completion of their graduate program. The changes in Domain 1, Number 4 better reflect that a Certified Genetic Counselor (CGC) is competent to order testing and provides important confirmation that graduate education enables achievement of that competency. These changes support the inclusion of the ability to order genetic testing in licensure legislation by explicitly outlining the ordering of tests in the PBCs.

In order to support the added component in overall competency represented by Domain 1, Number 4, graduate programs are expected to map their curriculum to reflect the additional aspects reflected in the new PBC language by submission of the 2020 Report of Current Status.