

Substantive Change - Increase in Program Enrollment

Instructions



Fostering excellence in education for the future of genetic counseling

Substantive Change Policy

It is the responsibility of each accredited program to notify the Executive Office of substantive changes in a program to ensure maintenance of accreditation status and protection of students. Failure to report a substantive change might place the accreditation of a program in jeopardy. Program directors are encouraged to contact the Executive Office with any questions about whether a contemplated change would be considered substantive under ACGC policies and seek approval before implementing the change. Notification of the substantive change should be submitted within a brief cover letter from the program director outlining the nature and scope of the substantive change, as well as the rationale for the change. The letter must outline how, if at all, the change affects the program's compliance with the accreditation standards. The program is responsible for documenting that it has the necessary resources in place to implement the proposed change. A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of a program.

A substantive change includes, but is not limited to:

1. Change in Established Sponsoring Institution [Standard A1]

This includes acquisition by another institution or program.

2. Change in Delivery Method of Didactic Coursework [Standards A1.3.1; A1.3.2; B1; B2; C2.4; C3]

Any permanent change in the delivery method of didactic coursework in which more than 10% of the curriculum will be offered through a different modality than previously reported (i.e., a program currently offers 13 courses in person and would like to transition 3 of these courses to an online/distance learning format).

3. Establishing a new off-campus instructional (not including fieldwork) site or closing an approved off-campus instructional site or branch campus. [Standards A1.2; A1.3; C3]

4. Increase in Program Enrollment [Standards all of A; all of B]

Any change in student enrollment not previously approved by ACGC that increases the total number of students enrolled in the program by more than 10% or 4 total students (whichever is smaller). Student enrollment is defined as the class size at the time

of the most recent accreditation decision.

The substantive change notification is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Upon review of the notification, the Board of Directors may act to approve the change or may request additional information. The Board's review of a substantive change application may result in additional reporting requirements, or a focused or comprehensive on-site evaluation. In the event the program undertakes a substantive change without prior notification to ACGC or otherwise does not follow the Substantive Change Policy, the program's accreditation could be negatively impacted. Late notification may be subject to additional fees and jeopardizes a program's compliance with the Standards. A denial of a substantive change is subject to [reconsideration and appeal](#) in accordance with Section VIII of ACGC Policies and Procedures.

Increase in Program Enrollment

Increase in Program Enrollment [Standards all of A; all of B]

Any change in student enrollment not previously approved by ACGC that increases the total number of students enrolled in the program by more than 10% or 4 total students (whichever is smaller). Student enrollment is defined as the class size at the time of the most recent accreditation decision. Please provide the following information:

Program Contact Information

Q1

Please describe the proposed expansion change in student enrollment over the accreditation period.

Q2

Please provide an updated budget.

No document provided

Q3

Please describe how the increase in enrollment will be accommodated in the fieldwork rotations. Provide a proposed rotation schedule map with a list of clinical sites, supervisors, and if an MOU or affiliation agreement is in place. For new rotations, please provide the affiliation agreement.

No document provided

Q4

Please describe, with examples, the impact on program capacity to accommodate the increase.

Q5

No document provided

REFERENCE: Standards - Section A

A1

Sponsorship

A1.1

A1.1 Institutional Responsibilities

A1.1.1

A1.1.1 The program must reside in a graduate degree-granting institution in the United States or Canada. This institution assumes primary responsibility for the program, although it can partner with other institutions that are responsible for

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A1.1.2

A1.1.2 The mission, goals, and expected outcomes of the program are aligned with those of the sponsoring institution and reflect standards and guidelines of the genetic counseling profession. Policies of the sponsoring institution and genetic

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A1.1.3

Programs must maintain affiliation agreements in accordance with institutional requirements. Affiliation agreements are strongly encouraged when other institutions contribute to the program.

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A1.1.4

Resources are allocated to advance the skills and meet the required continuing education requirements for program leadership and principal faculty. Resource support may include:

[Show More](#)

A1.2

A1.2 Institutional Resources

A1.2.1

Financial Resources

There must be financial resources to operate the educational program in order to fulfill obligations to matriculating and enrolled

[Show More](#)

A1.2.2

Program Income

- a. Tuition recovery;

[Show More](#)

A1.2.3

In-Kind Contributions

- a. Staff/faculty;

[Show More](#)

A1.2.4

Program Expenses

- a. Salaries;

[Show More](#)

A1.3

A1.3

Physical and Learning Resources

The program has physical facilities and learning resources needed to successfully operate the educational program and to fulfill

[Show More](#)

A1.3.1

Facilities

Physical facilities relate to office, classroom and/or other educational spaces that are necessary for student learning. This

[Show More](#)

A1.3.2

Learning Resources

Academic resources include instructional materials, medical information and current literature, other reference materials

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A2

Program Personnel and Faculty

The program staff and faculty must possess the educational and experiential qualifications to perform their assigned duties and to facilitate student achievement of the ACGC Practice Based Competencies (PBCs). Current and specific job descriptions for program leadership must be maintained by the program and available to the ACGC upon request. Program leadership is required to have designated time that is free from clinical service, research efforts, and institutional responsibilities to perform their educational and administrative duties directly related to the genetic counseling program. Clinical, research and other non-program administrative FTE cannot be used in the program leadership FTE calculation. Faculty and staff must have access and time to participate in continuing professional education to maintain and update their professional, teaching, supervisory, and administrative knowledge and skills.

A2.1

A2.1

Program Leadership

Individuals in program leadership positions are expected to have academic appointments and privileges comparable to other

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A2.1.1

Program leadership responsibilities include the following:

- Maintaining program compliance with the standards;

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A2.2

A2.2

Program Leadership Positions

[Show More](#)

A2.2.1

Program Director or Co-Directors

a. Programs may have no more than two (2) co-directors, and both must meet the qualifications delineated below;
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A2.2.2

Qualifications

Program directors of currently accredited programs, developing programs and programs holding Accredited New Program

[Show More](#)

A2.2.3

Responsibilities

At a minimum, the program director/co-director is responsible for the following:

[Show More](#)

A2.3

A2.3

Additional Leadership Positions

At least one other additional program leadership position must be filled to complement the role of the program director, fulfill

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A2.3.1

Qualifications

Individuals fulfilling additional program leadership positions may have a complementary professional background other than

[Show More](#)

A2.3.2

Responsibilities

The other program leadership positions are responsible for working in collaboration with the program director(s) to fulfill the

[Show More](#)

A2.4

A2.4

Program Leadership Policies

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A2.4.1

Program Leadership Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Requirements

a. There is a required minimum ratio of paid FTE dedicated to program leadership per total student enrollment (full or part
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A2.4.2

Program Leadership Personnel Change Policy

The program has a responsibility to promptly communicate to the ACGC all personnel changes involving program leadership

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A2.4.3

Interim Program Director or Co-Director

- a. During interim leadership, the program must submit quarterly reports to the ACGC that include the composition of the

[Show More](#)

A2.4.4.

Program Leadership Leave of Absence

- a. A leave of absence is defined as being absent from a program leadership position for 30 or more consecutive days. A leave

[Show More](#)

A2.5

A2.5

Instructional Faculty/Staff

The instructional faculty/staff may include genetic counselors, physicians, basic scientists, psychologists, social workers, and/or

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A2.5.1

Qualifications

The instructional faculty/staff must be qualified through:

[Show More](#)

A2.5.2

Requirements

The program is required to:

[Show More](#)

A2.5.3

Responsibilities

The members of the instructional faculty/staff must establish an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The instructional

[Show More](#)

A2.6

A2.6

Fieldwork Supervisors

The program must ensure that the students have sufficient access to fieldwork supervision by board-certified genetic counselors

[Show More](#)

A2.6.1

Qualifications

- a. Current genetic counselor certification by ABGC, the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors (CAGC), or ABMG[G];

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A2.6.2

Responsibilities

The fieldwork supervisors are responsible for student supervision and performance assessment in fieldwork training sites.

[Show More](#)

A2.7

Administrative Support Staff

At a minimum, the program must have 0.5 FTE of administrative support staff time. The personnel assigned to provide

[Show More](#)

A3

Operational Policies and Procedures

A3.1

A3.1

Sponsoring Institution

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A3.1.1

The sponsoring institution is required to publish information about the program. All announcements and advertising must accurately reflect the program offered and be in compliance with applicable accessibility policies and legislation.

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A3.1.2

Student, faculty, and staff recruitment, faculty and staff employment, and student admission practices must be non-discriminatory in alignment with applicable federal, state, and provincial non-discriminatory policies and legislation.

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A3.1.3

Students, faculty and staff must be informed about the institution's defined written policies and procedures for processing student and faculty grievances and allegations of harassment.

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A3.1.4

Students must be informed about, and have access to, student health and counseling services.

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A3.1.5

The health, safety, and privacy of clients, students, faculty, and staff associated with the educational activities must be reasonably safeguarded by the institution.

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A3.2

A3.2

Graduate Program

[Show More](#)

A3.2.1

Program policies apply to all students, principal faculty, staff and program leadership regardless of location, unless otherwise noted by institutional, state, or provincial requirements.

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A3.2.2

Admissions

- a. Admission of students must be made in accordance with clearly defined and published

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A3.2.3

Mission Statement and Objectives

A program's mission, vision, and/or value statement should include articulation of the program's commitment to diversity,

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A3.2.4

Student Handbook

The program must provide students with a student handbook or equivalent that contains the following information:

[Show More](#)

A3.2.5

Length of Training

All graduate programs in genetic counseling are required to provide training over a minimum of 21 months or two academic

[Show More](#)

A3.2.6

Student Records

- a. Student files kept by the program and/or institution must include documentation showing:

[Show More](#)

A3.2.7

Program Leadership Records must be kept by the program and must include:

- a. Current job descriptions that include duties and responsibilities specific to each program leadership position;

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REFERENCE: Standards - Section B

Section B: Curriculum and Instruction

An entry-level genetic counselor must demonstrate attainment of the ACGC Practice Based Competencies (PBCs).

Each program will develop and maintain its own curriculum and unique methods for developing these competencies. However, the curriculum must establish a strong foundation in the core areas of genetics/genomics and psychosocial counseling while always emphasizing the importance of remaining current with the dynamic field of genetic counseling.

Educational experiences, including didactic courses, fieldwork training, research, and additional experiences such as case conferences, seminars, and journal clubs, must demonstrate breadth and depth to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform, accurately and reliably, as genetic counselors.

B1

Instructional Plan

B1.1

B1.1

Instruction must follow a plan that documents and assesses appropriate learning experiences and curriculum sequence to develop the PBCs necessary for graduation. A variety of methods and materials can be used, including online learning and

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B1.2

For each curricular component, the program must define and publish instructional objectives that guide student acquisition of required PBCs. Instructional objectives must be stated in measurable terms and allow assessment of student progress in

[Show More](#)

B1.3

The program is expected to work collaboratively with faculty in designing and implementing courses with appropriate learning outcomes and student assessment tools that reflect the learning outcomes expected of students.

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B1.4

The program must demonstrate educational adequacy and equivalency of course content and/or fieldwork experiences when instruction is:

[Show More](#)

B1.5

The program is required to review its curriculum annually and subsequently update the corresponding syllabi.

[Show More](#)

B1.6

The program is required to review its curriculum annually, including a review of content for bias and diversity, and subsequently update the corresponding syllabi.

[Show More](#)

B2

Instructional Content

B2.1

B2.1

Content Areas

General content areas required to support the development of the PBCs in genetic counseling must include, but are not limited

[Show More](#)

B2.1.1

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

The topics addressed in B2.1.1 should be incorporated across all content areas in section B2.1.

[Show More](#)

B2.1.2

Principles of Human Genetics/Genomics

[Show More](#)

B2.1.3

Principles of Genetic Counseling and Clinical Genetics

- a. Clinical features and natural history of a broad range of genetic diseases, complex common disorders and syndromes

[Show More](#)

B2.1.4

Psychosocial Content

- a. Theories of counseling;

[Show More](#)

B2.1.5

Social, Ethical, and Legal Issues in Genetics

- a. NSGC/CAGC Code of Ethics;

[Show More](#)

B2.1.6

Health Care Delivery Systems and Principles of Public Health

- a. Health and social policy;

[Show More](#)

B2.1.7

Education

- a. Identification of the genetics educational needs of clients, patients, community and lay groups, students, and health and

[Show More](#)

B2.1.8

Research Methods

- a. Clinical and laboratory research methodologies and protocol development using both quantitative and qualitative

[Show More](#)

B2.1.9

Professional Development

- a. Certification examination preparation;

[Show More](#)

B3

Fieldwork Training

Fieldwork experiences must support the development of the PBCs by integrating didactic and experiential training. The program must regularly train, orient, evaluate, and communicate with its supervisors so that program administration, supervisors, and students have a common, clear understanding of the objectives, expectations, and evaluation measures for fieldwork placements.

B3.1

B3.1

General Description Fieldwork Training: Participatory Cases

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B3.1.1

Refers to participatory encounters (cases) with a client that support the development of the PBCs. "Client" can refer to individuals seen in a clinic setting; as standardized patients; or in certain research participant encounters.

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B3.1.2

Must include a minimum of 50 required participatory cases. At least 40 of the 50 required participatory cases must be with individuals being evaluated for risk of or affected by diverse genetic conditions across the lifespan (i.e., patients; not individuals

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B3.1.3

The 50 required participatory cases described above must be supervised by an experienced ABGC/ABMGG/CAGC certified genetic counselor.

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B3.1.4

Programs must demonstrate that participatory cases and other field experiences are conducted (1) across multiple specialties, including prenatal, pediatric, cancer, and other adult; (2) in a variety of diverse settings that may include clinical, laboratory,

[Show More](#)

B3.1.5

Programs must provide sufficient opportunities such that students are prepared to practice in each of the main specialties and settings. All participatory encounters (not just the minimum 50 required participatory cases) must be distributed across prenatal,

[Show More](#)

B3.2

B3.2 General Description Fieldwork Training: Fieldwork Supervision

B3.2.1 Programs must use a flexible and graduated supervision plan where the level of supervision is commensurate with each student's documented skills and competencies. A student in the early part of their training must be directly supervised at all times. After the student consistently achieves specific skills, the focus of direct supervision is expected to position the student to develop not-yet achieved or emerging skills. Programs are expected to monitor their supervisory protocols regularly and to protect students from taking on responsibilities they are not yet ready to handle or that are inappropriate for a student. The program is responsible for ensuring clients are not seen independently by a student who has not yet achieved the necessary skills to provide competent genetic counseling. Furthermore, the program must guard against students being used to compensate for inadequate genetic counselor staffing levels at given fieldwork training sites.

B3.2.2 Programs must ensure that the number of fieldwork supervisors enables equitable and comparable supervision experiences for all enrolled students.

B3.3

Programs must ensure that the number and variety of fieldwork opportunities offer all enrolled students equitable and comparable fieldwork training experiences that provide exposure to the full range of practice settings and full range of PBCs.

B3.4

Programs must develop clear objectives for each fieldwork placement.

B3.5

Programs must outline outcome measures for each fieldwork experience, document student progress, and monitor student activities during the placement.

B3.6

B3.6

Programs must maintain documentation of all student fieldwork experiences.

[Show More](#)

B3.6.1

Each program should determine how each student's fieldwork training will be tracked (e.g., a traditional "logbook" format, portfolio format, etc.). This documentation must provide a complete picture of each student's fieldwork training experiences.

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B3.6.2

Documentation of fieldwork training must be maintained within each student's record and include the entirety of the student's fieldwork encounters, without client identifiers. These files must be available for review during site visits as part of the

[Show More](#)

B3.6.3

The collection of documents demonstrating each student's ongoing fieldwork training as defined in B3.1 must include:

- Fieldwork name;

[Show More](#)

B4

Supplemental Fieldwork Experiences

B4.1

In order to enhance a student's acquisition of the PBCs, programs must ensure that fieldwork training for students is augmented with supplemental experiences such as, but not limited to:

[Show More](#)

B4.2

B4.2

Documentation

[Show More](#)

B4.2.1

Programs must document the credentials and qualifications of those who will be supervising the students in supplemental fieldwork experiences.

[Show More](#)

B4.2.2

Programs must develop clear objectives and outcome measures for student experiences and monitor student activities during the supplemental fieldwork placements.

[Show More](#)

B5

Additional Requirements

[Show More](#)

B5.1

B5.1

Student Teaching Experience

[Show More](#)

B5.1.1

Programs are required to include teaching opportunities for their students. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including but not limited to the following:

[Show More](#)

B5.2

Research and Scholarly Endeavors

Programs must require that students perform research and other scholarly activities.

Programs can utilize a variety of ways to meet this requirement, including a formal thesis, other independent research project, or capstone project. Programs should encourage and facilitate dissemination of their students' research and scholarly endeavors.