As part of preparing for reaccreditation and ensuring that we provide tangible learning goals for our students, all graduate academic programs should detail in the University Bulletin how they address three competencies: Knowledge, Core Skills, & Social Justice. This has already been developed at the undergraduate level and should now be expanded to graduate programs. Because the competencies have largely been geared toward the undergraduate majors, portions of the text appear solely directed toward the undergraduate academic community.

**DEPARTMENT:** Genetic Counseling  
**DEGREE:** MS

**GRADUATE LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES**

Brandeis University's Master of Science (MS) in Genetic Counseling is a two-year course of study, fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC), that integrates coursework with clinical experience in an environment that encourages close student/faculty interaction. Through teaching and supportive mentoring, our Program provides students with the clinical, counseling and research skills that will enable them to effectively work with individuals and families with disabilities, couples who are pregnant or hoping to become pregnant and patients who have, or may be at risk for, hereditary forms of cancer in a profession that continues to evolve.

**KNOWLEDGE:** Students who successfully complete the requirements for a Master’s Degree in Genetic Counseling will have a strong understanding of:

- Human genetics and genomics, molecular biotechnology and developmental and reproductive biology
- The clinical features, natural history, inheritance and treatment of a variety of birth defects and genetic conditions
- Laboratory testing methods utilized in the prenatal, pediatric and cancer settings
- Counseling theory and the techniques employed during short term counseling
- The social, legal and ethical issues surrounding genetic testing and counseling
- The methodology used to design and implement a research project
- How genetic counselors function in a variety of work settings and their roles and responsibilities within a medical team

**CORE SKILLS:** Through education in both the classroom and their internships, students will be well prepared to:

- Gather and document medical and family history information
- Assess patient risk and determine appropriate testing options
- Explain complex information in a way that is understanding to patients
- Give bad news in a sensitive and compassionate manner
- Counsel patients from diverse backgrounds for a variety of indications
- Initiate, or participate in, clinical research
- Work as an integral part of a healthcare team
SOCIAL JUSTICE: Disability awareness and education have been a part of the curriculum since the program’s inception. Students spend time with families and individuals who have a disability or genetic condition in their classes as well as through home visits and in educational settings providing services for these individuals. These activities will:

- provide students with exposure to both individuals with a variety of disabilities and the services that are available to them
- add to students' comfort level in working with individuals and families who have disabilities or genetic conditions
- increase sensitivity to the many issues faced by children and adults with disabilities

GRADUATE OUTCOMES: Students who complete the program have demonstrated mastery of all the required content areas within the 24 ACGC Practice Based Competencies. This should allow students to:

- work as a genetic counselor in a variety of clinical and non-clinical settings
- successfully sit for the American Board of Genetic Counseling’s Certification exam

UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES

UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING GOALS: N/A

UNIVERSITY OUTCOMES: N/A

SOURCES: Bulletin; Website:
http://www.brandeis.edu/gsas/programs/genetic_counseling.html;
http://www.bio.brandeis.edu/grad/gc/intro.html;
http://www.bio.brandeis.edu/grad/gc/employers.html