Faculty

Program Director

Kathleen D. Valverde, M.S., C.G.C., earned a B.S. in Psychology from Binghamton University and an M.S. in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling from Sarah Lawrence College. She returned to Sarah Lawrence College as the Fieldwork Facilitator for the Genetic Counseling Training Program before joining Arcadia University as the Assistant Director in 1995. In 2004 she assumed the role of Program Director. She has worked in the genetic counseling field for more than 25 years with extensive expertise in cystic fibrosis. She has served on the National Society of Genetic Counselors Board of Directors and as treasurer for the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fund. She is a founding board member for the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling, serving on the executive committee as treasurer and secretary. Currently she is the treasurer of the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors. Ms. Valverde has published extensively and has a special interest in clinical supervision and cancer counseling.

Assistant Director

Laura Conway, Ph.D., C.G.C., received a B.S. in Biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She engaged in research for several years before attending the Genetic Counseling graduate program at Arcadia University. After graduating in 1999, she practiced as a prenatal genetic counselor for five years. Dr. Conway is the secretary/treasurer of the National Society of Genetic Counselors board of directors, and she has been a member of the advisory group for the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship, for which she has served as finance officer and chair. She is the co-chair of Arcadia University’s Institutional Review Board. Her primary interest is how genetic counselors can incorporate changes in technology into their practice.

Clinical Coordinator

Lisa Kessler, M.S., C.G.C., graduated from the genetic counseling program at Arcadia University in 2000. Ms. Kessler worked as a genetic counselor in the Division of Medical Genetics and the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania. She was previously a Senior Genetic Counselor at DNA Direct by Medco and gained experience in telephone counseling and pharmacogenomics. She served as an abstract reviewer for the National Society of Genetic Counselors and has authored numerous publications throughout her career. Her primary interests are the psychosocial aspects of genetic counseling.

Adjunct Faculty

Stephanie Byers, M.S., C.G.C., Biochemical Genetics, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Laura Conlin, Ph.D., Department of Human Genetics, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Andrea Forman, M.S., C.G.C., Family Risk Assessment Program, Fox Chase Cancer Center
Rosaria Love, Ph.D., Practicing Clinical Psychologist
Genetic Counseling at Arcadia University

Donna McDonald-McGinn, M.S., C.G.C., Associate Director, Clinical Genetics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Livija Medne, M.S., C.G.C., Genetics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Rebecca Mueller, M.S., C.G.C., University of Pennsylvania
Sarah Noon, M.S., C.G.C., Department of Clinical Genetics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Kim Rainey, M.S., C.G.C., Risk Assessment Program, Fox Chase Cancer Center
Steven Robbins, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Arcadia University
Cynthia Rutherford, M.A., Counselor, Arcadia University Counseling Center
Nancy Spinner, Ph.D., Department of Human Genetics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Lewis Waber, M.D., Ph.D., Pediatrics, University of Texas Southwest Medical Center/Children's Medical Center.
Susan Walther, M.S., C.G.C., GeneDx
Vivian Weinblatt, M.S., C.G.C., Integrated Genetics
Alisha Wilkens, M.S., C.G.C., General Genetics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Master’s Degree
Master of Science in Genetic Counseling

About the Genetic Counseling Master’s Degree

National Recognition, Local Support
Arcadia's Genetic Counseling program is one of only 34 accredited programs in North America. Established in 1995, the program has graduated more than 200 students and is the second largest program in the country. Accepting 13-15 students annually, Arcadia provides personal attention and access to clinical opportunities at some of the nation's premier healthcare facilities.

Arcadia's program has the full support of the genetics community in the greater Philadelphia area. Clinical training is one of the program's greatest strengths, with individualized clinical opportunities at clinical genetics sites throughout the Delaware Valley. Access to so many clinical training centers allows students to broaden their educational experience beyond traditional clinics to research in medical subspecialties, health care management, and non-traditional genetic counseling roles. In addition, students participate in a variety of community service projects.

Arcadia alumni are working across the country in diverse genetic counseling roles. Employers have been extremely pleased with the Arcadia graduates' work ethic and performance. In fact, several institutions employ multiple Arcadia graduates.

The Master of Science in Genetic Counseling program offers a degree in a recognized specialty in medical genetics. The two-year, full-time graduate program is designed to provide students with the proficiencies and knowledge base required of a successful practitioner. The program includes scientific, medical, psychological and clinical courses combined with practical experience.

Students are taught to understand the complex environment in which the genetic counselor must work and learn to apply knowledge from basic sciences and psychology in order to address the needs of patients, community lay groups, and health and human services professionals. A research project/thesis during the second year is required for graduation.

The program meets the requirements of the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling for curriculum content, clinical experience and overall program design and has been granted full accreditation status. Therefore, students who graduate from the Arcadia University Genetic Counseling program are qualified to sit for the certification examination offered by the ABGC and for state licensure.

A Growing Profession: Genetic Counseling is a growing profession that combines expertise in scientific knowledge and finely developed counseling abilities. Although the majority of graduates work in major medical centers, the range of positions open to genetic counselors continues to expand and now includes general genetics services (pediatric and adult), clinical services devoted to one diagnosis (a specialty clinic), community support organizations, public health departments and services, administration, research, commercial laboratories, and private practice. The continuing growth in understanding inherited
Genetic Counseling at Arcadia University

Recent data suggest that there are sufficient numbers of positions available for new graduates in the field. The mean starting salary for a genetic counselor with a master's degree is $65,000, based on the Professional Status Survey of the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC). The NSGC is a strong professional organization which provides ongoing education and communication for genetic counselors through annual conferences, webinars, a newsletter and the Journal of Genetic Counseling.

The NSGC 2014 Professional Status Survey reports the median salary for clinical genetic counselors as $67,000. Potential applicants are urged to contact the NSGC for information about careers in genetics at www.nsgc.org.

Academic and Clinical Facilities: Arcadia's typical class size is 13-15 students per year. A genetic counseling program house serves as a central location for students to meet and obtain information about conferences, job announcements and other opportunities.

The wealth of genetics services in the Philadelphia area provides students with a broad range of clinical experiences in settings that include community hospitals and university-based medical centers. All clinically oriented courses are taught by experienced members of the genetics community.

Practica and Clinical Internships: The first-year practica are based at any of 24 different institutions throughout the Philadelphia area. In the second year, a total of 58 clinical internship sites are available. These sites include 22 prenatal, eight pediatric, 11 cancer, and numerous specialty clinics in the areas of reproductive genetics, neurogenetics, metabolic genetics, cardiovascular genetics and others. The clinical internships are supervised by board-certified genetic counselors and/or board-certified clinical geneticists. The location of these sites extends from Trenton, N.J., to Newark, Del., and from Camden, N.J., to Harrisburg, Pa.

The Arcadia University Genetic Counseling program has alumni who are working in more than 29 states. Arcadia graduates have achieved professional recognition in various areas. Many students have had thesis projects presented as abstracts or published in professional journals.

100 Percent of Alumni Recommend Arcadia’s Program: Results of the 2010 Alumni Survey found that 100% of those who completed the survey would recommend Arcadia’s Genetic Counseling program to prospective students. Ninety-eight percent also felt that their Arcadia training had prepared them well for work in the field. Employment rates are high, with 100% of the graduates of the Class of 2014 employed in the genetic counseling field within three months of graduation.

Genetic Counseling Frequently Asked Questions

When are applications due? Applications are due on January 15.

What are the Graduate record Examination (GRE) codes? Arcadia University's GRE code is 2039.

Where do I send applications and supporting documents? Applications and supporting documents should be sent to:

Arcadia University
Enrollment Management Office
450 S. Easton Road
Glenside, PA 19038-3295

Can I still apply even if I haven't finished all the pre-requisite courses? Yes, applications will be reviewed from applicants who have not completed all of the pre-requisite courses with the understanding that an accepted student must complete these courses before classes start in September.

When will I be notified if I am offered an interview? Invitations for interviews are generally emailed in mid-February.

When do interviews take place? Interviews are scheduled throughout the months of March and April. Invited applicants will be instructed to call the Genetic Counseling Department office to schedule an interview.
When will I be notified whether I've been accepted to the program? There is a universal acceptance date for all Genetic Counseling programs approved by the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors (AGCPD). This date is usually the last Monday in April.

How many students apply to Arcadia's program? How many students are accepted? The Arcadia University Genetic Counseling program receives more than 100 applications per year, and 13-15 students are accepted for the incoming class.

What are the average GPA and GRE scores of accepted students? A minimum GPA of 3.3, GRE score of 150 for both quantitative and verbal sections, and minimum of 4.0 on the analytical section are recommended. However, multiple factors are considered during the admissions process. The admissions committee weighs many variables when selecting a student, so students who do not have these minimum requirements are still welcome to apply.

What type of volunteer experience do I need? The admissions committee would like to see that the applicant has observed some genetic counseling sessions prior to applying to the program. However, due to many constraints, this type of opportunity is not available to all applicants. In lieu of genetic counseling observations, work in other health-related fields will be considered. Experience with some form of crisis counseling is also recommended.

Are scholarships or financial aid available to students? For the past two years, scholarships have been awarded to all accepted students averaging $7500. All students are eligible to apply for graduate assistantships which pay $14.29 per hour.

Does Arcadia accept international students? If so, are there additional entrance exams? The Arcadia Genetic Counseling program does admit international students. International applicants should visit www.arcadia.edu/international for detailed information on admission requirements and application procedures. Official results from the TOEFL or IELTS are required for all students for whom English is a second language except for non-native speakers of English who hold degrees or diplomas from post-secondary institutions in English-speaking countries (e.g. the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand). A course-by-course evaluation of all transcripts by an independent evaluation service based in the United States also is required.

Whom should I ask for letters of recommendations? Three personal letters of recommendation are required for admissions, including at least one from a college professor and one from a practicing genetic counselor or comparable health professional.

Can I visit Arcadia's Genetic Counseling program? Graduate Open Houses are held three times a year in the months of April, August and November. Other dates can be arranged by contacting the program director.

Is there a thesis requirement? Each student develops and performs an independent research project. The projects are initiated in the second semester of the first year and written up as a thesis by the end of the second year. Many of these projects are subsequently submitted for presentation at national meetings and/or for publication.

Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Admissions Requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements, the following requirements must be met. All application materials must be in the Office of Enrollment Management by January 15.

1. A Genetic Counseling application, including personal statements, to be completed online at www.arcadia.edu/gradapp.
2. A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a recommended GPA of 3.3 or better.
3. One official transcript from each college, university or professional school attended. Transfer credits included on a transcript must include grades earned; if not, an official transcript from the original school must be submitted. Transcripts must be sent from the issuing school in a sealed envelope and contain the appropriate signatures and seals to be considered official.
Genetic Counseling at Arcadia University

4. The prerequisite courses listed below. All courses used toward the minimum prerequisites must be taken through the appropriate departments, e.g., Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology. All prerequisite courses must be completed prior to the start of the Genetic Counseling program. One-half of the prerequisite courses must have been taken within 10 years prior to application.
   a. Biological Sciences—four courses in Biology, including General Genetics. (Human Genetics should not be substituted for a General Genetics course.)
   b. Chemistry—three courses, to include at least one semester of General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry.
   c. Psychology—two courses.
   d. Statistics—one course, which should include descriptive statistics, differences between two means, correlation and beginning concepts of analysis of variance.

5. Three letters of recommendation, at least one from a professor and one from a practicing genetic counselor or comparable health professional.

6. Test scores for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), taken within the last five years. A minimum score of 150 is required for the verbal and quantitative portions of the test. A minimum score of 4 is required for the analytical writing portion of the test.

7. A personal interview with the program director and assistant director.

8. Knowledge of the profession through work or volunteer experience. A broad overview of the profession is preferable to experience in a limited area.

9. A high degree of both physical and emotional health.

10. International applicants should visit www.arcadia.edu/international for detailed information on admission requirements and application procedures. Official results from the TOEFL or IELTS are required for all students for whom English is a second language or who have not earned degrees or diplomas from post-secondary institutions in English-speaking countries (e.g. the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand). A course-by-course evaluation of all transcripts by an independent evaluation service based in the United States also is required.

All application materials must be sent to the Office of Enrollment Management.

Application Deadline

All application documents, along with a $50 ($25 online application) non-refundable application fee, must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Management by January 15 of the year in which the applicant is seeking admission.

Notification of admission is made to applicants by letter or e-mail on the universal acceptance date in late spring, and candidates are expected to reply by the date indicated in their notification. A $500 deposit must accompany the acceptance reply. This deposit is applied to the first semester tuition, and it is non-refundable if students fail to enter the program on the date for which they are accepted.

Expenses

Tuition for 2015: $31,500

Fees:
- Parking, registration, student liability insurance $130 (per year).

Additional Expenses:
- Books and supplies (estimated):
  - Year one – $500; Year two – $400
- Room and Board: Off Campus
- Travel: Varies

Upon enrollment into the program, all students must provide proof of medical insurance and also provide information about their health and medical history. If needed, medical insurance can be purchased through the University. Information and applications are available at Student Health Services.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

All accepted students are eligible for partial-tuition scholarships for Genetic Counseling students. Upon acceptance into the program, students will be reviewed automatically for these scholarships, which are based upon financial need and academic achievement and are renewable for two years.
**Genetic Counseling** at Arcadia University

**Graduate Assistantships**
In addition to partial scholarships awarded to all qualified students, graduate assistantships are available. Select students automatically are awarded graduate assistantships upon acceptance, but any full-time graduate student may apply for an assistantship, working a specified number of hours per week for a department. Questions regarding graduate assistantships should be directed to the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies at 215-572-2925.

**Outside Scholarships**
Additionally, students are encouraged to contact outside organizations to apply for outside scholarships. For more scholarship opportunities, refer to the National Association of Genetic Counselors at [www.nsgc.org](http://www.nsgc.org).

**Master of Science in Genetic Counseling Requirements (M.S.G.C.)**
(86 credits)

**Program Requirements**
- A minimum of 86 credits including coursework practica, clinical internships, and thesis.
- Satisfactory completion of four clinical internships at approved sites with participation in at least 50 supervised cases.
- A research paper (thesis) satisfactorily completed during the second year.
- An overall minimum GPA of 3.0 maintained throughout the program.
- A grade below “C” is not acceptable toward the degree.
- Continuous enrollment.

**First Year**

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<th>Fall Semester (21 credits)</th>
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<tr>
<td>GC 501 Advanced Genetics (4 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 502 Medical Physiology (4 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 507 Human Embryology and Teratology (4 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 509 Introduction to Genetic Counseling (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 510 Practicum (3 credits)</td>
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<th>Spring Semester (21 credits)</th>
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<td>PY 521 Research Design, Methods and Evaluation (3 credits)</td>
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**Second Year**

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<th>Summer I (7 credits)</th>
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<tr>
<td>GC 530 Introduction to Thesis (1 credit)</td>
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<td>GC 541 Reproductive Genetics (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 542 Clinical Internship (3 credits)</td>
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<th>Fall Semester (19 credits)</th>
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<td>GC 545 Clinical Internship (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 554 Grand Rounds I (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 556 Topics in Professional Development (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 558 Thesis I (2 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 565 Biochemical Genetics (2 credits)</td>
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<th>Spring Semester (18 credits)</th>
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<tr>
<td>GC 546 Clinical Internship (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 551 Medical Genetics II (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 553 Genetic Counseling Techniques II (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 555 Grand Rounds II (3 credits)</td>
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<td>GC 557 Ethical Issues in Genetic Counseling (1 credit)</td>
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Genetic Counseling at Arcadia University

GC 559  Thesis II (2 credits)
GC 566  Contemporary Issues in Genetic Counseling (3 credits)

Elective Courses: Up to 3 elective courses from the following can be taken:

PY 605  Addictive Behaviors: Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders Counseling (3 credits)
PY 610  Group Counseling (3 credits)
PY 611  Couples and Family Therapy (3 credits)
PBH 560  Issues in Community and Environmental Health (3 credits)
PBH 530  Theories of Health Behavior and Health Education (3 credits)
PBH 573  Human Sexuality (3 credits)
PBH 578  Stress: Use and Misuse (3 credits)
PBH 583  Contemporary Health Topics (3 credits)