



EMORY | SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Genetics Counseling Program: Fall 2020

Dear Students -

By now, you should have received the email from Emory University announcing plans for the fall semester. We are writing to provide additional details for students in each of our School of Medicine degree programs. As a reminder, degree programs in the School of Medicine follow a *different* calendar from Emory College and other graduate programs.

Genetic Counseling Program Fall Calendar:

Orientation week/Pre-session: 8/17-21

Classes begin: 8/26

Fall break: 10/22-23

Thanksgiving break: 11/26-27

Classes/rotations end: 12/18

Curriculum and Format

As you saw in the university email, undergraduate students will be offered a choice to attend courses in-person or remotely. However, given the nature of health professional education, we strongly believe that a fully remote education will not allow genetic counseling students to become competent clinicians. As the current epidemiology of COVID-19 changes in our community, we are confident that we can progressively construct educationally sound and reasonably safe experiences that will allow you to learn the knowledge and skills you will need.

Over the next few months, we expect to offer some lectures and classes remotely, while some activities will require in-person attendance. When in-person teaching is required, we will take all reasonable precautions to keep our students as safe as possible. (Please be aware that all students of the SOM are currently precluded from providing care to patients being evaluated or treated for COVID-19 infection). Current policies that address student safety include:

- Distribution of appropriate PPE to students and training on how to use it
- Requirement to wear appropriate face masks in all public spaces
- Limit on the number of people gathering in person
- Enforcement of physical distancing requirements and reconfiguration of space to accommodate these requirements
- Adherence to protocols for sanitizing spaces in the School of Medicine and associated learning spaces

Our plans were developed in close collaboration with subject matter experts in the Emory Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Disease; our hospital epidemiologists, and

leaders across our medical school and the university. As the earlier email noted, the current pandemic reminds us that physicians and scientists must be flexible, ready to thoughtfully adapt to global, national and regional changes. With that in mind, understand that at some point we may need to change curricular plans to preserve personal health, adapt to community needs while doing our institutional best to ensure academic continuity. We do have contingency plans, and we will keep students informed if changes are being considered.

Should any genetic counseling student feel that they are unable to continue their education because of personal health concerns—or any other personal reason—please speak with Dr. Bellcross. Requests for deferral or leave of absence are definitely options available to you.

Survey

To support ongoing planning efforts, Emory University will send out a survey on Monday, June 15. Emory is a large and diverse university; keep in mind that the survey is designed to capture preferences and feedback from Emory's entire professional and graduate student community, so *some questions may not be applicable to School of Medicine students*. We ask you to complete the survey as best as you are able, and provide candid input, understanding that some questions may not be relevant to you.

Finally, we echo the words of our university leaders in reminding you that while some things will be different this fall, core elements of the Emory experience will remain the same: our world-renowned clinical and scientific faculty will deliver learning opportunities that meet Emory's rigorous standards. You will have access to the tremendous resources of our hospitals and clinics and our greater research university, and you will be part of a supportive and compassionate community. Our patients and our community need the next generation of genetic counselors to begin training.

We are excited to see you in August!

Cecelia

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