

**Master of Science in**  
**Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2024-2025**

### Notice of Equal Opportunity

Thomas Jefferson University is committed to providing equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, marital status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability or veteran's status. The consideration of factors unrelated to a person's ability, qualifications and performance is inconsistent with this policy. Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning Thomas Jefferson University's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is directed to contact their Student Affairs Dean or Human Resources - Employee Relations, who have been designated by Thomas Jefferson University to coordinate the institution's efforts to comply with these laws. Any person may also contact the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202, or the Director, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Region Three, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, regarding the University's compliance with the equal opportunity laws.

\* \* \*

### Provisions of this Handbook

The intent of this handbook is to describe the general policies and procedures regarding the Jefferson College of Life Sciences and the Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling Program for the 2021-22 academic years. It is not intended to be a binding, irrevocable contract between Thomas Jefferson University and the student. The institution reserves the right to alter without notices its policies, procedures, fees, and academic offerings as is deemed expedient and necessary. Additional general university-wide policies are available on the Thomas Jefferson University Student Catalog and Handbook website <https://www.jefferson.edu/life-at-jefferson/handbooks.html>.

For more current information about our graduate programs, consult our Jefferson College of Life Sciences website at: <https://www.jefferson.edu/university/life-sciences.html>. Thomas Jefferson University is fully accredited by the Commission of Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

## Table of Contents

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Notice of Equal Opportunity .....       | Page 2  |
| Provisions of this Handbook .....       | Page 2  |
| Jefferson College of Life Sciences..... | Page 4  |
| Mission Statement.....                  | Page 5  |
| Curriculum.....                         | Page 6  |
| Enrollment Information.....             | Page 7  |
| Fees and Expenses .....                 | Page 18 |
| Standards and Policies.....             | Page 20 |
| Medical Requirements.....               | Page 24 |
| Student Affairs .....                   | Page 25 |

## Thomas Jefferson University

### Jefferson College of Life Sciences

The Jefferson College of Life Sciences of Thomas Jefferson University, originally established July 1, 1969 as the Jefferson College of Graduate Studies, is responsible for the planning, operation, and administration of educational programs of Thomas Jefferson University that lead to graduate degrees in the Life Sciences, including the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. It is also responsible for stimulating, establishing, and coordinating research and post-baccalaureate educational projects that cross traditional school boundaries.

The Jefferson College of Life Sciences offers Ph.D. programs in biochemistry and molecular pharmacology; cell and developmental biology; genetics, genomics and cancer biology; immunology and microbial pathogenesis; and neuroscience. An M.D./Ph.D. program is offered jointly by the Jefferson College of Life Sciences and Sidney Kimmel Medical College. The College of Life Sciences also offers M.S. programs in life sciences, cell and developmental biology, human genetics and genetic counseling, microbiology, pharmacology, clinical research and forensic toxicology. Additionally the College offers graduate certificate programs in clinical research and trials: implementation, clinical research: operations, human clinical investigation: theory, infectious disease control, and patient-centered research.

For individuals seeking to complete their basic science requirements in preparation for entrance to medical and other health-professional schools, the Jefferson College of Life Sciences offers a Post-baccalaureate Pre- Professional Program (P4). It is also the administrative home of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

The administrative offices of the Jefferson College of Life Sciences are located on the mezzanine floor of Jefferson Alumni Hall, 1020 Locust Street. The Office of the Dean and Office of Finance and Business Planning reside in suite M-63. The Office of the Post-baccalaureate Pre-Professional Program is in room M-60. The Office of Admissions, Office of Academic Services, and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs are located in suite M-46. The Director of Admissions and staff handle all materials of applicants seeking admission to the College. Enrollment and all academic records of matriculated and non-degree students are administered by the University Registrar and staff, located in the Curtis Building, 1015 Walnut Street. The University Financial Aid Office, located on the 1st floor of the Curtis Building, assists students with student loans and other financial matters.

The Graduate Council has jurisdiction over academic policy, acting on behalf of the Graduate Faculty. Its membership consists of representatives of the graduate degree programs. Under the chairmanship of the Dean, the Council approves new programs and courses, and acts on student requests and petitions regarding academic matters. Each Ph.D. and M.S. degree program is supervised by a faculty committee, headed by a program director.

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs within the College of Life Sciences oversees matters related to

postdoctoral training, including establishment of personnel policies for the postdoc population, coordinating career seminars and extracurricular activities.

### **Master of Science Program in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling Mission Statement**

The Jefferson Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling Program's mission is to provide an integrated approach in the education and training of genetic counselors, committed to creating an inclusive community where we learn, practice and apply knowledge focused on human genetics, counseling and inherently related ethical, psychosocial, and legal issues –from the classroom to the clinic and beyond. Our program's primary objective is to support the cultures, experiences, ideas, and identities of our students, promoting their development of practice-based competencies, and abiding by the NSGC Code of Ethics. Our vision is that our graduates will capably serve diverse communities with innovative, quality, compassionate care and cultural humility.

This mission is in concert with that of the sponsoring institution, as the Jefferson College of Life Sciences within Thomas Jefferson University strives to provide the highest quality graduate education and research training in order to prepare students to make significant contributions to their chosen field through careers within healthcare, academia, industry, and beyond.

### **Overview**

During the two years spent as a graduate student in the Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling program, students will learn the principles of genetic counseling and medical genetics and their application to clinical genetics health care. Ultimately, students will acquire the knowledge and clinical skills to function as a competent and caring genetic counselor in a wide range of settings and roles. The curriculum of the program has been designed to provide students with in-depth knowledge regarding principles of human and medical genetics, the psychosocial impact of genetic disorders, and the research process in genetic counseling. Students will learn content through course work and apply the information through clinical rotations and a capstone/thesis research project. In addition, students will gain experience through attendance and presentations in conferences, seminars, workshops and community outreach.

The curriculum is outlined below:

## Curriculum\* (credits)

| YEAR ONE                           |
|------------------------------------|
| <b>YEAR 1 - FALL</b>               |
| Intro to Genetic Counseling (2)    |
| Human Genetics (3)                 |
| Embryology (3)                     |
| Medical Genetics I (2)             |
| Clinical Applications I (2)        |
| Lab/Clinical Observer Rotation (1) |

|  |
|--|
| <b>YEAR 1 - SPRING</b>   |
| Pathobiology of Cancer (2) Module 1 Only                                     |
| Clinical Applications II (1) Module 1 Only                                   |
| Clinical/Lab Rotation (1) Module 1 Only                                      |
| Ocular Genetics (1) Module 2 Only  |
| Clinical Applications III (1) Module 2 Only                                  |
| Research Design & Methods For Genetic Counselors (2) Module 2 Only           |
| Clinical/Lab Rotation (2) Module 2 Only                                      |
| Gene Environment Interactions in Birth Defects and Disease (2) Module 1 Only |
| Medical Genetics II (2)  |
| Clinical Cancer Genetics (2)   |
| Psychosocial Issues in Genetic Counseling (3)                                |

|  |
|--|
| <b>YEAR 1 - SUMMER</b>                             |
| Metabolic Genetics I (2) Module 1 Only             |
| Clinical Cardiovascular Genetics (1) Module 1 Only |
| Genetic Counseling Theory and Practice I (2)       |
| Practical Issues in Genetic Counseling (1)         |
| Statistics (2)                                     |
| Thesis I (2)                                       |
| Clinical/Lab Rotation (3)                          |

## YEAR TWO

### YEAR 2 - FALL

Genetic Counselor Workshop and Seminar I (2)

Genetic Counseling Theory and Practice II (2)

Metabolic Genetics II (2)

Genetic Basis of Neurologic and Psychiatric Disease (1)

Thesis 2 (2)

Clinical/Lab Rotation (3)

### YEAR 2- SPRING

Thesis III (2)

Genetic Counseling Workshop and Seminar II (2)

Clinical/Lab Rotation (3)

**\*order may be subject to change**

## ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

A student is ultimately responsible for meeting all requirements for a degree and for graduation. Program leadership communicates with each student about overall progress, individual educational needs, and goals at least twice per academic year. Mentorship by advisors, faculty, the thesis research committee, and the deans is offered in an advisory capacity only; it is the student who must assure that all course, credit, and graduation requirements are fulfilled. Foreign national students who hold an F-1 or J-1 visa are required to be continuously enrolled in order to maintain lawful immigration status in the United States. Any change in enrollment must be approved by the Program Director and the Office of International Affairs, <http://www.jefferson.edu/international-affairs.html>

### Enrollment / Registration

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with and observe the academic policies of the College in all matters including course registration, adding and dropping courses, and withdrawal from courses and/or the College as stated in this Handbook. While the College will maintain student records, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their academic record is accurate. To receive credit for a graduate course, students must enroll through the University Office of the Registrar at the time of registration prior to the beginning of each semester. Registration is available online via Banner Web and must be completed by the dates specified. Non-payment of tuition by the specified due date may result in the cancellation of registration.

Each student is also required to obtain an ID card through the Photo ID Center on campus. Refer to the section in the TJU Student Handbook.

## Banner Web

The Banner Web information system is available for students and faculty to more conveniently access academic records and process routine academic functions. The Banner Web system can be found at <https://banner.jefferson.edu/>. Appropriate security features have been built in to maintain confidentiality of this information.

Features that are available through the internet include:

- Application for admission
- Application for financial aid
- Course registration
- Viewing of course schedules
- Viewing of final grades
- Request for transcript
- Payment for tuition charges
- Viewing and updating demographic information

## Degree Works

Degree Works is an easy-to-use online set of academic planning tools that assists students and advisors in tracking and planning academic progress and ultimate completion of degree requirements. Degree Works is integrated with Banner curriculum information to provide real-time degree counseling capabilities, giving students meaningful and consistent direction and providing advisors and student record managers with up-to-date curriculum and course completion information as well as identifying outstanding requirements needed for graduation.

<http://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/tju/academic-services/registrar/degree-works.html>

## Compliance with University Health Regulations

Upon admission to the Jefferson College of Life Sciences, all students are required to provide to University Health Services a pre-matriculation report of medical history, health evaluation, and proof of inoculation. Appropriate forms are sent to all new students prior to the Fall Semester or prior to matriculation at any other time. The physical examination may be given either by the student's private physician or at University Health Services at the student's expense. A student must take care of this matter prior to the time of matriculation. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in the student not being allowed to register for the following semester. See additional policy on Medical Requirements.

<http://hospitals.jefferson.edu/departments-and-services/university-health-services/>

## Laboratory Safety Training

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations state that all students who will be working in a laboratory setting are required to be trained in proper laboratory safety procedures. The Jefferson Department of Environmental Health and Safety provides this training for all new students following matriculation. [Lab-Safety-Guide-2013.pdf \(jefferson.edu\)](#)



## Clinical Rotations and Fieldwork Placement

**Policies and Procedures** - Students will be assigned to a fieldwork or clinical placement(s) at the beginning of each semester. While every effort will be made to accommodate student preference for rotation location, site availability and specialty area take precedence for the assignment. Clinical Affiliation Agreements or Master Agreement between Jefferson and clinical sites may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical site. Expectations and evaluation methods for each rotation will be reviewed with student and supervisor prior to rotation commencement. Students are required to maintain a log of cases from each clinical rotation.

**Conduct** - During clinical/fieldwork rotations, students are expected to act in a professional manner, limiting conversations to appropriate content and not discussing confidential information in public areas. Refrain from texting or doing personal emails to remain engaged in the training experience. Leave work areas clean after use. Students must maintain Jefferson's standards regarding online media and must refrain from posting anything related to patients or clinical training experiences.

**Dress Code** - Students should follow the below guidelines at all clinical/fieldwork rotation sites.

- Clothing should be clean and in good repair. Shirts, skirts, pants and dresses should be business-casual in nature unless otherwise specified by rotation site. Spaghetti straps, camisoles, etc. must be covered by a jacket or sweater at all times.
- Shoes should be clean and in line with the uniform or dress for the specific rotation
- Hair (including facial hair) should be clean and groomed
- **The following are not permitted irrespective of rotation site:**
  - Flip flops
  - Denim
  - Uncovered leggings
  - Shorts, Skorts (including walking shorts)
  - Sweat pants/shirts
  - Casual tee shirts

As dress codes may vary by institutions, students should inquire with each site regarding use of perfumes/cologne, rules regarding body piercings and tattoos, hair coloring, facial hair, finger nail length and polish rules, any specifics regarding dress, such as open toed shoe/sandals, and jewelry. As room temperatures at clinical sites may vary be prepared with a business-casual layer of clothing if needed.

**Email** - Please be sure to use an encrypted system whenever sending patient related information that contains any HIPAA identifiers, including drafts of any patient communications or updates. Please note that usage of email for patient-related communication varies among clinical sites.

**Comprehensive List of Clinical Sites and Fieldwork Placements:** Students rotate at a variety of sites in the city, the greater Philadelphia region and have access to rotations in other parts of the country or even abroad, when available. Sites include but are not limited to Thomas Jefferson University, Christiana Care, Main Line Health, Nemours, Atlantic Health, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Albert Einstein Medical Center, Cooper Medical Center, Bay Health, Tower Health Reading/Phoenixville, Lehigh Valley Healthcare Network, Geisinger Medical Center, Doylestown Hospital, among others.

**Evaluation forms** are discussed with students at the time of orientation and will be reviewed during the curriculum.

### **Cell phones/Pagers**

Cell phones and pagers should be turned to vibrate when in classes, conferences, or clinical/fieldwork rotations. Please refrain from texting or doing personal emails when in class and clinic. If you are using your phone in relation to work you are completing for your clinical rotation or you have a specific personal need for use, please communicate with your supervisor so this use is approved.

### **Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Classes begin at varied times throughout each day. Students should check email each night for any last minute changes or additions. Clinical rotations also begin at varied times each day so students should check with clinical supervisor prior to presenting to the clinical rotation each day. Discuss with supervisor their preferred method of contact and keep contact information with you at all times. Students are expected to arrive approximately 5 minutes before the start of class or clinic/fieldwork rotation.

### **Sick days**

Students who are sick are required to notify BOTH program leadership AND the course instructor and/or clinical rotation supervisors directly. Students are required to make up any missed coursework or rotation time as determined by course coordinator/clinical supervisor and approved by program leadership.

### **Chronic Absences and Tardiness**

Chronic absences and/or tardiness can impact learning, patient care schedules in a clinical setting, and reflect poorly on your professional motivation and dependability. Chronic tardiness to clinical/fieldwork rotations will result in a warning from Program Leadership. Each course coordinator has specific guidelines regarding how tardiness and absences are handled. If a student wishes to request a leave of absence due to illness, personal or family crisis, the process should be discussed with the leadership.

### **Scheduled Absences**

Students may miss days for previously planned events (weddings, special events, holidays, etc.), or due to a clinical rotation conflict. The planned absence must be authorized by the Program Leadership.

Students must obtain approval from any clinical supervisors and course coordinators individually after receiving approval. Student must make up any missed material.

### Credits

Students in the Jefferson College of Life Sciences pursuing a Master of Science degree in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling are matriculated into the full time program. However, for national and state statistical reporting purposes, a student is considered a “full-time” student if carrying a course load of nine credits or more per semester. One credit in graduate courses represents one hour of lecture or one day of clinical rotation per week for 16 weeks. Six credits are designated for thesis/capstone research project.

### Grading System

The following scale, effective the Fall Semester of 1994, gives the suggested numerical equivalent for faculty who wish to do the initial grading by using a numerical scale. Only a letter grade will appear on the official transcript.

| Grade | Quality Points | Suggested Numerical Equivalent |
|-------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| A     | 4.0            | 90 or above                    |
| A-    | 3.7            | 87-89                          |
| B+    | 3.3            | 84-86                          |
| B     | 3.0            | 80-83                          |
| B-    | 2.7            | 77-79                          |
| C+    | 2.3            | 74-76                          |
| C     | 2.0            | 70-73                          |
| F     | 0.0            | 69 or below                    |
| S     | --             | Satisfactory/ Pass             |
| U     | --             | Unsatisfactory/Fail            |
| W     | --             | Withdrawal                     |
| I     | --             | Incomplete                     |

Core courses within the didactic curriculum will be graded using the letter grade (A-F) system with the numerical correlations as described above. A grade of “B” or better is required in each course for successful completion of the program. A combination of examinations, written works, projects, class discussions and/or participation will be used for student evaluation; expectations and requirements for each course will be outlined in each course syllabus.

Clinical/fieldwork rotations, Practical Issues in Genetic Counseling, Workshop and Seminar courses and Thesis courses will be graded using the S(P)/U(F) scale. Students’ performance in clinical rotations will be accessed by clinical supervisors and a grade of satisfactory is required for at least 3 clinical rotations for graduation. Students and supervisors are informed of expectations for each rotation. Additionally, each student must complete and submit a minimum of 50 logbook cases meeting ACGC standards before completing the program.

Students who are making progress toward completing research-related milestones outlined in the Thesis I, II and III courses will receive a grade of satisfactory; completion of the thesis/capstone project is required for graduation.

All students will be required to take a comprehensive examination, which will also be graded on the S(P)/U(F) scale, with passing being any score of 80% or greater. Students must pass this examination as a requirement of graduation. The grade on the examination will not contribute to the grade point average. Students failing the examination will be required to re-take it; deficit content areas will be reviewed with students to improve comprehension. Students can have up to 4 total attempts to pass the examination; graduation date may be delayed with multiple examination attempts. Failure to pass the examination is grounds for dismissal.

### Auditing

Auditing a course without registration and receiving a grade is not permitted.

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

The grade point average is derived from the grades and credit hours of courses taken. For each course graded A through F, multiply the number of Quality Points (QPTS - see above for 4.0 scale) by the GPA Hour (GPAH - Courses graded A through F) credit value. Add the products of these multiplications for each course and divide that sum by the sum of GPA Hours to arrive at the GPA. Courses for which a student has the designation of S, U, W, or I and grades for transferred courses, are not included in the computation of the grade point average.

Grades are part of the student’s permanent record. Once submitted and entered on the student’s transcript, no changes will be made to this record, with the exception of entering the final grade to replace an “I” or correcting an inappropriate grade. (Refer to “Change of Grade”.)

### Change of Grade

To change a student’s grade of “I” (Incomplete) or to correct a grade, the professor/instructor should complete and sign a Grade Change form, available in the University Office of the Registrar. A student who believes that they have received an inappropriate grade should contact the instructor or course coordinator. If the outcome is not satisfactory to the student, further review may be pursued with program leadership and if then needed, the Dean of the JCLS. A change of grade may be made within six weeks from the last day or final examination of the course.

## Transcripts

Students may review their grades and unofficial transcript on Banner Web at any time. A fee per transcript will be charged for each official transcript issued. All transcripts must be ordered online at:

<https://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/tju/academic-services/registrar/resources/transcripts.html>

The college reserves the right to withhold transcripts from students under certain circumstances, such as defaulting on a loan or having financial obligations to the University.

An official transcript, printed on security paper, is identified by the signature of the University Director of Student Records. Alteration or forgery of such a document is a criminal offense. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibit release of educational records to a third party without the student's written consent. Upon receipt of the written request by the student and the payment of the fee, the transcript may be released to the third party. If the third party requires the student to submit an official transcript with other materials, the transcript is stamped "Issued to Student", is enclosed in a sealed envelope with the signature of the Director of Student Records across the sealed flap, and is then given to the student to submit to the third party.

### **Changes of Schedule: Dropping and Adding Courses**

Students who wish to revise their schedules after registration must complete a Drop/Add Form and return it with the signatures of their advisor or program director to the University Office of the Registrar. Students may drop a course before the third class meeting. A course that is dropped does not appear on the student's transcript.

Students, in consultation with their advisors, are responsible for making certain that any changes in schedule will fulfill requirements for the degree. Students receiving financial aid should also consult with the University Office of Financial Aid regarding the effect that changing their academic schedule may have on their eligibility for aid.

Students who stop attending classes without filing the required Course Drop form will be responsible for the full payment of tuition and may receive a failing grade for the course. Verbal notification to the course instructor or the Registrar's Office does not constitute an official course drop. Similarly, students who attend classes without properly registering for or adding a course will not receive credit for the course. The addition of a student's name to the class list by an Instructor does not constitute course enrollment.

## Course Withdrawal

After the conclusion of the Drop period, students may withdraw from a course by obtaining the appropriate form from the University Office of the Registrar and securing the signatures of their advisor or program director. A student who is authorized to withdraw from a class prior to the date published in the Academic Calendar will receive a grade of "W" if the student's performance is at a passing level. If the student is failing at that time, a grade of "F" will be recorded. No credits or quality points are given for either grade, which will remain on the student's permanent record. However, the grade of "F" is included in the calculation of the student's grade point average, while the grade of "W" is not.

A student is not allowed to withdraw after the end of the third quarter of the course and will receive the grade or “F” if they do not complete the course. For the present purpose, the course begins the first day of that class, which may be later than the first day of the semester.

Students who stop attending classes without filing the required Course Withdrawal form will be responsible for the full payment of tuition and will receive a grade of “F” for the course. Verbal notification to the course instructor or the Registrar’s Office does not constitute an official course withdrawal. In order to receive credit for a course from which a student has withdrawn, the student must re-register for the course in a subsequent term. Withdrawing from a course may delay program completion.

### Failure to Complete a Course

A student, who has not met all requirements of a course, may be given the grade of “I” (Incomplete). A grade of “I” indicates that the instructor is not prepared to give a grade for the course because the student has not completed all requirements for the course. This grade automatically becomes an “F” if the work is not completed and a grade is not submitted by the instructor within six weeks after the end of the course or the final examination. Failing a course will delay program completion.

### Academic Probation

In order to be considered making satisfactory academic progress, the student is required to maintain a cumulative grade point average no less than B (3.0). A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below B or who has more than one incomplete grade will be placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation will meet with program leadership on a weekly basis to report their progress. Program leadership will contact current instructors to discuss methods for improving student outcomes within each course and review this information with the student.

Students will have the following semester to make up the deficiency. Students on academic probation who have not been able to obtain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher after the following probationary semester must petition the Graduate Council for permission to continue as a student in the College, or be discharged from the College. The student must submit the petition in writing to the Dean of the College of Life Sciences for consideration by the Graduate Council. The petition should include pertinent, detailed information in support of the request to continue graduate study. The student must also request a written statement from the co-director of the graduate program; this statement should be forwarded to the Dean.

The Graduate Council will make a decision either to allow the student to continue study in the College or to dismiss the student. In the former case, Council will define a set of recommended conditions under which the student may be allowed to continue study. The decision of the Council will be provided to the student in writing and is final.

### Academic Remediation

Any student with less than a B average in any course or with an average score less than 3 in any clinical rotation or with one incomplete grade will receive academic remediation. Students receiving academic remediation will meet initially with program leadership to assess any issues potentially impacting academic performance. Study habits will be discussed and sources for tutoring will be examined so any necessary accommodations/interventions can be considered to promote students’ success. Remedial work (additional assignments/role plays, standardized patient interactions, etc) will be assigned by

program leadership as needed to ensure comprehension of material and/or improvement in clinical skills (average  $\geq 3$ ). Students will meet with leadership/course coordinator/academic support as appropriate to review progress and identify barriers to success until a course average of B or better or an average clinical rotation score of 3 or greater is achieved.

### Failure in a Course

A student who receives a grade of “F” in any course must petition the Graduate Council for permission to continue graduate study. The student must submit the petition in writing to the Dean of the JCLS for consideration by the Graduate Council. The petition should include pertinent, detailed information in support of the request to continue graduate study. The student must also request a written statement from the director of the graduate program; this statement should be forwarded to the Dean.

The Graduate Council will make a decision either to allow the student to continue study in the College or to dismiss the student. In the former case, Council will define a set of recommended conditions under which the student may be allowed to continue study. The decision of the Council will be provided to the student in writing and is final.

The grade of “F” will remain on the student’s permanent record and will be computed in the student’s grade point average. No credit for the course will be earned.

### Repeating a Course

A student who has been placed on probation or who receives a grade of below a B in a course that is a requirement of the student’s degree program, will be required to repeat the course. A course may be repeated only once. The student must obtain prior approval from the student’s advisor, program co-directors, and the Dean. Whenever a course is repeated, no additional hours attempted will accrue, and the latter grade replaces the previous grade in computing the grade point average, and in assignment of academic credit. Both grades remain a part of the student’s permanent academic record.

### Transfer of Credits

Currently transfer credits are not accepted based on the horizontal and vertical integration of the curriculum, clinical rotations, and field work experiences.

Credits previously applied to a Master of Science degree may be eligible for transfer into the course requirements for either a master’s or doctoral degree. A student wishing to transfer credits for a graduate course earned at another institution, should submit a written request to the co-directors of the Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling program at Jefferson, accompanied by a course description and a syllabus. A grade of B or better is required in each course for which transfer of credits is requested. An official transcript from the outside institution should be obtained if not already included in the student’s academic file. The student should request from the director of their graduate program a written assessment in support of this request for credit transfer. All the above materials should then be forwarded to the JCLS Dean’s Office for review. Grades for courses for which transfer of credits is approved are not recorded on the student’s transcript and are not used to compute the grade point average. When necessary, credits from the other institution will be converted to credit equivalents in the Jefferson College of Life Sciences, as defined in this handbook.

## Change of Student Status

Any change in student personal data information or student status requires completion of the appropriate form which may be obtained in the University Office of the Registrar or may be available via the Banner Website.

## Leave of Absence

A student in good standing asking for a leave of absence from the College is required to submit a written request to the director of the graduate program indicating the effective start and end dates and reasons for the leave. The student should forward the request, accompanied by the above letter, to the Dean's office for final approval. The student will receive a written confirmation or denial of the request for a leave. By a prescribed date, as noted in the confirmation letter, the student must notify their program director, the Dean's office and the University Registrar of their intention to return to graduate study. A leave of absence may be granted for a maximum of one year. The student, however, may return to graduate study prior to the designated end of the leave, provided due notice is given to, and approval obtained from, the student's program director, the Dean, and to the University Registrar. Throughout the leave period, it is the student's responsibility to stay in touch with and keep their program director, and the dean's office informed of their status and intent to return from their leave of absence. If the student does not return to graduate study by the end of the leave, the College may administratively withdraw the student from their graduate program. A leave will not be granted to students with outstanding financial obligations to the University.

For medical leaves of absence students must proceed through University Health Services, which will notify the Office of the Dean of its recommendation regarding a medical leave. No medical leaves will be reviewed or received without the endorsement of the Director of University Health Services, or other physicians designated by the Director of University Health Services.

Medical leaves will be for a period of up to one year. A leave of more than one year's duration will be granted only under the most extraordinary circumstances and only after review by the Office of the Dean. Prior to reentry, which may be applied for prior to the one year anniversary, appropriate medical screening will be arranged by the Director of University Health Services with consultation, if necessary, to provide assurance of the student's fitness to return to graduate study.

## Withdrawal from the College

Students wishing to withdraw from the College must do so in writing, specifying an effective date, to the Dean. Proper notification must also be made to the student's program director. The official date of withdrawal is normally the date approved by the Dean. The student will receive written notification of the decision for withdrawal from the Dean's office.

## Graduation

Program leadership will conduct a formal evaluation at least 3 months prior to program completion to communicate each student's readiness, discuss potential outstanding issues, and manage timelines for completion.



**Academic Requirements for Graduation include:**

1. Successful completion of all course credits, with a cumulative grade point average of B (3.0) or higher in each course
2. Passing over 80% of clinical rotations at ACGC-approved sites with satisfactory reviews from the clinical supervisor.
3. Completed and signed ACGC logbook reflecting clinical/fieldwork activities including at least 50 participatory cases
4. Completion of a thesis/capstone project and presentation
5. Completion of a comprehensive examination with a score of at least 80%

In addition, all financial commitments to Thomas Jefferson University must be fulfilled prior to graduation, including payment of late library fines, housing fees, and tuition. The student's diploma will be withheld until the above criteria are met.

### Graduation: Diploma; Cap, Gown, and Hood

Each student expecting to graduate in a given year should complete an Application for Degree Certificate by the date specified by the University Office of the Registrar prior to the final semester of degree completion. All students eligible for graduation will be notified concerning graduation materials by the Registrar's Office. These materials include an Application for Degree Certificate which must be completed and submitted by the date published in the Academic Calendar, order forms for the diploma and cap and gown for Commencement Exercises, and information about the ceremony and rehearsal times. The cap, gown, and hood become the property of the graduate.

Their cost and that of the diploma are fully covered by the Jefferson College of Life Sciences. The cost of replacing a diploma lost or damaged by the alumnus/ is the responsibility of that alumnus/a. Request for replacement diploma should be made to the University Office of the Registrar along with circumstances concerning the loss or damage of the original diploma. Any questions regarding graduation may be directed to [Jefferson.Graduation@jefferson.edu](mailto:Jefferson.Graduation@jefferson.edu)

## Fees and Expenses

### Tuition and Fees

Information about tuition and fees applicable to the College's academic programs are outlined at the TJU Tuition website, <https://www.jefferson.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid/tuition-information.html>.

### Payment of Fees

Payments of all fees, including tuition, may be made by cash, check, bank draft, or money order at the University Tuition and Cashier's Office, telephone: 215-503-7669. Thomas Jefferson University Curtis Center Room 925 E 601 Walnut Street Philadelphia, PA 19106. On-line payment of either check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard) can be made through Banner Web. All payments are due by the date indicated on the invoice. Any course enrollments will be automatically dropped if payment or satisfactory payment arrangements are not completed by the semester's due date. A student may re-enroll in classes once their financial obligation is met and they pay the re-enrollment fee. The University offers an extended payment plan through Tuition Management Systems.

Any student, who fails to complete registration, including the payment of all financial obligations due the University, shall be deprived of the privileges of the College. Payment of all outstanding financial obligations must be completed in order to receive credit and grades for the semester in which they currently enrolled and to be permitted to enroll for the following semester. Should the student default on any tuition payment, it will result in submission of the account to a collection agency. All attorney's fees, collection costs, and charges necessary for the collection of any amounts not paid when due will be the responsibility of the student. More information about payment of tuition and fees is contained on the TJU Tuition Office website:

[Tuition & Financial Aid \(jefferson.edu\)](https://www.jefferson.edu/tuition-and-financial-aid)

### Jefferson College of Life Sciences Awards

Several awards and scholarships are offered through the College. Some of these awards are described below. Specific details of these and other awards are available in the Finance Office of the Jefferson College of Life Sciences located in M-63, Jefferson Alumni Hall.

#### Jefferson College of Life Sciences Alumni Thesis Prize

This award, made possible through the support of the Jefferson College of Life Sciences Alumni Association, is given to a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy or Master's degree for an important original contribution to scientific literature.

#### Jefferson College of Life Sciences Alumni Travel Fellowships

These awards are used to assist graduate students attending national or other major scientific meetings related to their program of study or a career/professional development opportunity.

Applications for these funds are available on the College's website under Student Resources, Policies &

Guidelines.

### Foerderer Grants for International Study

The Foerderer Foundation has approved grants for Thomas Jefferson University students to use for a study abroad experience. Students in the Jefferson College of Life Sciences have the opportunity to present a study plan and apply for funding to supplement a partial personal contribution to the costs. Applicants must submit a proposal including the objectives and outcomes of the experience, designated faculty mentors both here and abroad, and a description of the site. If you have questions or need access to resources for developing a study plan, contact the Office of International Affairs for assistance.

### Standards and Policies

#### Academic Integrity Policy

The Administration and Faculty of the Jefferson College of Life Sciences believes that academic integrity is one of the most important values and behaviors that should be practiced by students during their studies. Because we are committed to training future scientists and educators who perform the highest quality of research, the College Administration and Faculty are equally committed to mandating and enforcing the practice of academic integrity by all students. The following policy on academic integrity defines dishonesty and describes the procedures for responding to charges of academic dishonesty in the College.

#### Forms of Academic Dishonesty

##### Plagiarism

As stated in the American Medical Association Manual of Style, “in plagiarism, an author passes off as their own the ideas, language, data, graphics or even scientific protocols created by someone else, whether published or unpublished.” This can include use of artificial intelligence (AI) unless otherwise directed.

When a student submits work for credit that includes the words, ideas or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. By placing their name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

1. Quoting words, complete sentences or paragraphs, or entire pieces of written work that are not the student’s own without acknowledgment of the source.
2. Using another’s ideas, opinions or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one’s own words, without acknowledgment of the source.
3. Noting the original source of only a part of what is borrowed.

4. Borrowing facts, statistics or other illustrative materials that are not clearly common knowledge without acknowledgment of the source.
5. Copying another student's essay test answers.
6. Copying, or allowing another student to copy, a computer file that contains another student's assignment and submitting it, in part or in its entirety, as one's own.
  
7. Working together on an assignment, sharing the computer files and programs involved and then submitting individual copies of the assignment as one's own individual work. Students are urged to consult with individual faculty members if in doubt.

### Fabrication

Fabrication is the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Citation of information not taken from the source indicated. This may include the incorrect documentation of secondary source materials.
2. Listing sources in a bibliography not directly used in the academic exercise.
3. Submission in a paper, thesis, lab report or other academic exercise of falsified, invented or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate and knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin or function of such data or evidence.
4. Submitting as one's own any academic exercises prepared totally or in part by another.

### Cheating

Cheating is an act or an attempted act of deception by which a student seeks to misrepresent that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered.

Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Copying from another student's test paper or allowing another student to copy from a test paper.
2. Using the course textbook or other material such as a notebook brought to a class meeting but not authorized for use during a test.
3. Collaborating during a test with any other person by receiving information without authority, or collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is not expressly permitted.
4. Using or possessing specifically prepared materials during a test, e.g., notes, formula lists, notes written on the student's clothing, etc., that are not authorized.

5. Taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test in one's place.
6. Exchanging information, e.g., through electronic (text messaging) or physical (tapping pencils or other objects) means.
7. Entering any office or opening a file to obtain a test or answer key.
8. Viewing test materials on a secretary's or faculty member's desk.
9. Passing quiz/test questions or answers from one student to another, even after the test is completed.
10. Copying a posted answer key without permission.
11. Discussing test questions or answers outside the examination room while the test is in progress.

### Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is the intentional violation of University policies, by tampering with grades, or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of an unadministered test. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Stealing, buying or otherwise obtaining all or part of an unadministered test.
2. Selling or giving away all or part of an unadministered test including answers to an unadministered test.
3. Bribing any other person to obtain an unadministered test including answers to an unadministered test.
4. Entering a building or office for the purpose of changing a grade in a grade book, on a test or on other work for which a grade is given.
5. Changing, altering or being an accessory to the changing and/or altering of a grade in a grade book, on a test, in a computer, on a "change of grade" form or other official academic records of the University which relate to grades.
6. Entering a building or office for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test.
7. Continuing to work on an examination or project after the specified allotted time has elapsed.
8. Signing into classes for others.

### Sanctions

Two possible sanctions exist for cases of academic dishonesty. Option A outlines adjudication of cases at the discretion of the faculty. Cases may also be referred directly to the JCLS Judicial Board for adjudication under Option B of these guidelines.

### Option A

Option A is limited to one or more of the following, by choice of the faculty member:

- a verbal reprimand
- a written reprimand
- a grade of zero for an assignment or examination
- a requirement that the student repeat the work affected by the academic dishonesty
- a statement concerning the action to be sent to the Dean by the instructor

No notation of faculty action will appear on the student's transcript. However, the College may choose

to keep documentation in the student's file and this may be taken into account if the student is involved in another incident of academic dishonesty.

When the instructor chooses to have the student repeat the assignment, the instructor will tell the student the maximum grade that may be assigned for the repeated assignment. For example, it is acceptable for the instructor to assign no more than a minimal passing grade to a repeated assignment, if successfully completed by the student.

The student may contest the instructor's allegation by requesting a hearing with the Judicial Board. Any such request must be made within five (5) working days from the time the student has been informed of the charge and the instructor's recommended resolution. The instructor's initial penalty will be considered in assessing a penalty for a guilty finding by the Judicial Board.

### Option B

Direct referral of the charge by the faculty member to the Judicial Board for adjudication. Information concerning procedures for requesting a judicial hearing is found on the TJU Student Handbook website under University Policies.

<http://www.jefferson.edu/university/academic-affairs/schools/student-affairs/student-handbooks/university-policies/code-of-conduct.html>

### Grievance Policy

For student grievances other than grades or dismissal due to unsafe clinical performance, students are encouraged to address the problem at the point closest to the issue. In Jefferson College of Life Science, the student is encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute directly with the faculty or staff member. If dissatisfied with the outcome, the student may meet with the appropriate Program Director (s), who will attempt to mediate the situation. If the student is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they may meet with the Dean. The Dean is the final authority in hearing student grievances. All parties are encouraged to address the issue promptly in writing (with three (3) class days whenever possible) so that resolution of the grievance should require no more than three weeks.

## Harassment Policy: Reporting Bias, Discrimination and Harassment

Harassment based on any other protected status is equally prohibited and will not be tolerated. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of age, race, color, religion, creed, sexual identity, preference or orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, veteran status, handicap or disability or any other characteristic protected by law or that of their relatives, friends or associates. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the academic, clinical or work environment of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated adversely based on a characteristic protected by law including but not limited to a person's sex, age, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, veteran status, disability or any other protected group or status

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, and will not be tolerated. The following behaviors are prohibited:

- To threaten or insinuate, expressly or implicitly, that any student is required to submit to sexual advances or to provide sexual favors in order to participate in a University program or activity
- To make any educational decision or take any action based on a student's submission to or refusal to submit to sexual advance.
- To engage in unwelcome sexually-oriented or otherwise hostile conduct which has the purpose or effect of interfering unreasonably with another person's work or academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive environment. Such an environment can be created by a University employee, another student, or even someone visiting the University, such as a student or employee from another school.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and overt behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different sex. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against, harassed by or retaliated in violation of this policy, you should report the alleged violation immediately to the appropriate Title IX Coordinator, Assistant Provost Jennifer Fogerty, at 215-503-6335 (for Jefferson Colleges of Health Professions,

Nursing, Pharmacy, and Population Health), or Dean Gerald Grunwald at 215-503-4191 (for Jefferson College of Life Sciences).

You also have the option to report the incident to the Student Affairs Dean, your Course or Clerkship Director, Human Resources, Employee Relations, or you can call the ComplyLine at (888) 5-COMPLY. Please speak with whichever person you feel the most comfortable, whatever your reasons. All complaints will be investigated promptly, and the existence and nature of your complaint will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to make a prompt and thorough investigation or as may be necessary to take appropriate corrective measures. Further information on reporting and procedures in cases of sexual misconduct can be found in the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Any individual with knowledge of an incident involving **Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment** by a University community member can make a report using the **Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment Reporting Form**.

### HIPAA Privacy Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the responsibility of Jefferson personnel to comply with the privacy provisions set forth in the Standards for Privacy of Protected Health Information of HIPAA. It is the policy of Jefferson to maintain compliance with the Privacy Rules. Jefferson is committed to best practices concerning patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality, and will safeguard the creation, collection, use, storage, disposal and disclosure of Protected Health Information ("PHI").

This Policy applies to all PHI, regardless of the form in which it is created or maintained (oral, written, or electronic). Questions concerning this Policy should be directed to the TJU/JUP Privacy Officer (215-955-8585).

### Medical Requirements

Requirements for start of program:

- Completed Pre-Matriculation Physical Evaluation form
- Physical examination within 12 months preceding matriculation
- Proof of immunity documents as either a positive IgG antibody OR documentation of 2 varicella vaccines
- Dose of Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) highly recommended within the preceding 5 years
- Hepatitis B immunity as documented by at least 3 doses of vaccine and a positive hepatitis B surface antibody
- Tuberculosis screening
  1. Interferon Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) blood test, i.e. Quatiferon –TB Gold
  2. For those with positive results, a chest x-ray performed within the 6 months preceding matriculation is required
- Any student living on campus must provide either documentation of a meningococcal vaccine or a signed declination



- Seasonal influenza vaccine is mandatory for all students. Free flu vaccine will be provided by University Health Services during the fall semester.
- Thomas Jefferson University requires students who are clinical (participate in educational activities involving patient exposure or activities within a healthcare facility) to have completed a COVID-19 primary vaccination series. Clinical rotation sites may have additional requirements.

### **Criminal Background Checks and Drug Testing**

Participation in clinical experiences and rotations is a required part of the curriculum and a requirement for graduation. A criminal background check and/or child abuse check is required for matriculation in order to permit participation; specific clinical sites may require additional clearances. Clinical sites may deny a student's participation in a clinical experience or rotation because of a felony or misdemeanor conviction, failure of a required drug test, or inability to produce an appropriate health clearance, which would result in delayed graduation or in the inability to graduate from the program. All students will be required to undergo Criminal Background Checks in order to proceed with patient care.

### **Student Affairs: Student Advising/Guidance/Support**

The Office of Student Affairs offers support to students in a variety of ways. The Center for Academic Success includes Academic Support Services and the Student Writing Center that offer workshops and one-on-one consultations to help guide students through their academic career. The Center for Career Success also provides students guidance. Students needing accommodations can contact Accessibility Services to facilitate the Disability Accommodations process. The office also provides policy guidance to students, including the Grade Appeal process, the Judicial Board process, or a Title IX complaint, as well as connection to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Students are also supported by the Student Counseling Center (SCC).

Here are links to these services:

<http://www.jefferson.edu/university/campus-life/student-affairs.html>

[Accessibility Services \(jefferson.edu\)](#)

[Student Counseling Center \(jefferson.edu\)](#)

### **Diversity, Inclusions and Community**

The College of Life Sciences is committed to nurturing an inclusive community of learners and teachers. Resources for students regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion can be found through the below links.

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(jefferson.edu\)](#)

[Office of Inclusion, Diversity & Community Engagement \(jefferson.edu\)](#)



