

Tips for Completing the Full Application:

- Q: Should I apply if my GPA is below a 3.5?
- If it's at least 3.0, then yes, you should apply.
- Q: What is considered a full application?
- The electronic application
 - Two letters of recommendation
 - Your official transcripts from your most recent college/university
- Q: How will I know if I'm missing anything in the application?
- It is your responsibility to follow up with the Iowa Institute of Human Genetics to find out if we've received all pieces of your application. It is also your responsibility to then follow up with your college/university regarding your official transcripts; follow up with your letter writers *prior* to the submission deadline.

Personal Statement (essay) Tips

- Q: What exactly are you looking for?
- Tell us who you are. If you want to be a genetic counselor, it's probably safe to say that you like science and want to help people. Think about other reasons why you want to be a genetic counselor. Keep in mind that although individual genetic conditions can be rare, having or knowing someone with a genetic condition is not enough to get selected. Telling a story or providing more insight as to why this has made you want to pursue a career in genetic counseling can be more meaningful.
 - Tell us what you want to accomplish in your career as a genetic counselor. We understand you have probably investigated several career options. Why do you want to be a genetic counselor?
 - Show us that you're professional. Read your letter BEFORE you submit your application and edit it. Double check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Letters that aren't proofread stand out, and not in a favorable way. Be positive – don't put down your school, other professions, etc.

Transcripts

- Q: Will you accept unofficial transcripts?
- No. The application specifically says official transcripts must be sent directly to the Iowa Institute of Human Genetics from your most recent college/university.
- Q: I'm taking a class in biology and we did a unit in genetics. Does that count as having completed a course in genetics?
- No.
- Q: My college/university must send transcripts through the mail and they might not get there before the deadline. Am I still eligible?
- If you request your transcripts before the deadline, yes.

Tips for Applicants Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Q: What is a Reference?

- References are people who know you professionally that will provide a reference letter in support of your application.

Q: Who should I ask to write my letter of recommendation?

- People who know you well. Think about your total application and all your experiences. Ask people from the various aspects of your life and experiences to provide you letters of recommendation. For example, do not ask only your biology professors unless they can speak to different aspects of your application/experiences. A world-renowned professor who does not know who you are is not helpful.
- People who you have worked with within the last year. These can include professors, advisors, coaches, employers, etc. (i.e. not high school teachers).

Q: What information do my letter writers need?

- Ask to meet with a potential writer in person. Explain what you are interested in and the program you are applying to.
- Make sure the person knows what program they are writing a letter of recommendation for.
- Offer to provide some text they can incorporate in their letter, or your CV/resume.
- Make sure they know [and use] your correct name.

Q: Who should not write my letter of recommendation?

- Do not ask anyone with whom you have a personal relationship, such as your doctor/nurse/family friend.
- Do not ask anyone for a letter of recommendation unless you intend to complete the full application process. It is inconsiderate to ask someone to take the time to write you a letter if you're not serious about applying and participating.

Q: My letter writer sent me their letter to send to you. Will you accept it?

- No. Letters are required to be sent directly to the Iowa Institute of Human Genetics from the letter writer.

Tips for Letter Writers

- A little information about the program or course is helpful, but a lot of information does not provide us information about the student. When most of the letter is spent describing the letter writer's course, research, program, we assume you either; 1) do not know the student; 2) do not have anything favorable to say about the student.
- Make sure you use the correct; 1) student name, pronouns/gender; 2) student career interest; 3) correct program name. When we read multiple names, or different programs and careers, we are not sure if the letter is for the correct student, or if the student is interested in genetic counseling.
- If you don't have time to write the letter, please tell the student. If we don't receive the required number of letters the student's application is considered incomplete and not reviewed.

Application Consideration and Interviews

Q: When will I hear back about my application?

- Applications are due by midnight on March 4. Applications will be reviewed during the month of March. After the initial review, we select several applicants to offer interviews to during the first couple of weeks of April. We do not typically communicate any decisions regarding applications until after the top applicants have accepted positions in our summer internship. The reason for this is because if they turn down the offer, we will go back to our application pool for reconsideration. All applicants will receive a letter with our final decision by the end of April.

Q: Are interviews in person or via webinar?

- They are hosted electronically, using [Zoom](#). We strongly recommend you test your system and familiarize yourself with using Zoom prior to your interview.