

Gateway to Genetic Counselling

If you are a senior registered nurse or midwife, you may be able to transition to a career as a genetic counsellor by completing additional training in genetics and counselling.

What is a Genetic Counsellor?

Genetic Counsellors are healthcare professionals with advanced training in both genetics and counselling, whose role it is to help patients understand and make decisions in situations where their genes affect their health.

More information about Genetic Counselling

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/what-is-genetic-counselling>

More information about Genetic Counselling in the NHS

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/genomic-counselling>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Genetics/Pages/genetic-testing-and-counselling.aspx>

Why train as a Genetic Counsellor?

Genetic testing is increasingly being used to guide patient care in many areas of medicine, yet few healthcare professionals are trained to understand genetic test results and explain genetic information to patients and families. We anticipate that the demand for healthcare professionals who are genetically literate will increase due to initiatives such as the [100,000 Genomes Project](#), the NHS England [Personalised Medicine Agenda](#), and the launch of the [NHS Genomic Medicine Service](#).

The Cambridge Gateway to Genetic Counselling

The Cambridge Genomic Medicine Programme is a collaboration between Cambridge University Hospitals, the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (WTSI), the EMBL-European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI), Wellcome Genome Campus Advanced Courses and Scientific Conferences, and the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge. The programme offers suitable training opportunities in medical genetics and counselling which may count towards the **formal educational components** required for a senior nurse or midwife to be eligible to submit a “Notification of Intention to Register” form to the The Genetic Counsellor Registration Board

<http://www.gcrb.org.uk/media/14446/applicant-guidelines-v3-july-2017.pdf>.

Please note: in order to register as a genetic counsellor, a candidate must also complete at least two years fulltime (or equivalent) clinical work in a genetic counselling post under the supervision of a Registered Genetic Counsellor. Please direct any questions regarding registration to the GRCB.

In reference to the “Set B” criteria outlined in the linked document above:

The specific training, described as a “Gateway to Genetic Counselling” includes:

- A full-time week of in-person teaching in Human Genetics and Genomics, followed by the completion of an assessed assignment, accredited through the Institute of

Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge. This may fulfil the following requirement: “Completion of an academically accredited course in the science of human genetics of no less than 30 guided learning hours. The applicant must show evidence of having passed a formal assessment/examination as part of that course”

- A full-time week of in-person training in Genomic Counselling, followed by the completion of an assessed assignment, accredited through the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge. This may count towards the following requirement: “Completion of training in counselling skills of at least 90 guided learning hours (from 2012 at least 30 hours of the counselling training must be delivered via an academically accredited course and the applicant must show evidence of having passed a formal assessment/examination as part of that course)”
- Provision of resources and supervision to facilitate guided-learning

Funding may be available from HEE for NHS staff for the two in-person teaching weeks. For details of dates, accommodation, funding, and to register, please email: genomics@ice.cam.ac.uk

Routes to train as a Genetic Counsellor if you are not already a nurse or midwife

Other training routes involve the completion of Master’s level training in Genetic/Genomic Counselling. This can be undertaken through the NHS Scientist Training Programme: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/genomic-counselling/entry-and-training>

Or through Master’s programmes provided by other UK universities:

Cardiff distance-learning programme:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/taught/courses/course/genetic-and-genomic-counselling-msc>

Glasgow programme:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/geneticandgenomiccounsellingwithworkplacement/>

Links to professional organisations

- The Genetic Counsellor Registration Board <http://www.gcrb.org.uk/>
- The Association of Genetic Counsellors and Nurses <http://www.agnc.org.uk/>
- The British Society for Genetic Medicine <http://www.bsgm.org.uk/>
- European Board of Medical Genetics <https://www.eshg.org/408.0.html>
- The National Society of Genetic Counsellors (USA) <http://www.nsgc.org/>