

## MC-GENCOUN Master of Genetic Counselling

<b>Year and Campus:</b>	2010 - Parkville
<b>Fees Information:</b>	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, <a href="http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees">http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees</a>
<b>Level:</b>	Graduate/Postgraduate
<b>Duration &amp; Credit Points:</b>	
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<b>Contact:</b>	Margaret Sahhar (course coordinator) T:+61 3 8341 6256 E: <a href="mailto:margaret.sahhar@ghsv.org.au">margaret.sahhar@ghsv.org.au</a> ( <a href="mailto:margaret.sahhar@ghsv.org.au">mailto:margaret.sahhar@ghsv.org.au</a> )
<b>Course Overview:</b>	<p>Genetic counsellors work in a multidisciplinary team with clinical geneticists, nurses, social workers, dietitians, communicating complex genetic information to individuals and families to facilitate decision making. Genetic counsellors are employed in clinical genetics units and work in many areas including: cancer genetics, predictive testing, paediatric genetics, prenatal genetics, adult genetics. Genetic counsellors increasingly are involved in qualitative and quantitative clinical genetic research.</p> <p>The <b>Masters in Genetic Counselling</b> constitutes the professional qualification for entry into employment as an associate genetic counsellor, and for Part 1 certification, awarded through the Board of Censors in Genetic Counselling (Human Genetics Society of Australasia).</p> <p>The 2 year <b>Masters of Genetic Counselling</b> is designed to build and increase skills and breadth in clinical practice and research, utilizing the expertise of tutors who are clinicians, genetic counsellors, scientists, people with a disability and community members. The Masters is taught within the clinical genetics service Genetic Health at the Royal Childrens Hospital Parkville Victoria. Students are encouraged to attend educational activities within Genetic Health including seminars, clinic meetings and journal club.</p> <p>The existing <b>Graduate Diploma</b>, established in 1996, is a successful 1 year program and is an exit point after 1 year of study in the Masters.</p> <p>Internationally, genetic counselling is taught within a 2 year clinical Masters. The Masters program aims to increase research and employment opportunities for graduates through developing reciprocity with other countries. With well established links to overseas training programs there are international opportunities for students, through an active exchange program for clinical placements and research collaborations. Past graduates are employed throughout the world -including in Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand. It is expected that graduates of the Melbourne Masters will be eligible to register to practise as genetic counsellors in the UK and Canada, further increasing employment opportunities.</p> <p>The Masters of Genetic Counselling will fulfil the requirements for certification and employment as a genetic counsellor in Australia and reciprocity with training overseas. The program teaches counselling skills, research skills and clinical genetics knowledge in small interactive student groups. Problem Based Learning is one mode of teaching in the genetics tutorials. This mode of teaching facilitates independent learning which equips the student to continue to develop professionally throughout their career. Students will complete a minor thesis with supervision, and have extensive counselling skills practice in varied clinical genetics and community settings. Assessment tasks mirror the skills needed in genetic counselling practice and for professional certification by the HGSA(Part 2)</p> <p>Teaching staff are primarily practising genetic counsellors, scientists and clinicians within the clinical genetics service.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p><b>Research and Evaluation Skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># Develop skills of research methodology from the Graduate Diploma to effectively implement original supervised clinical research;</li> <li># Understand the ethic committee process and develop an ethics proposal;</li> <li># Undertake a critical literature review relevant to a particular topic of research;</li> <li># Develop original research arising from clinical practice;</li> </ul>

- # Present findings from a original research project at a professional forum;
- # Understand the principles of qualitative research, including research design and process in an ethical framework OR
- # Understand biostatistical concepts and methods and their application in the assessment and management of health conditions OR
- # Develop an understanding of the nature and purposes of health program evaluation.

#### **Critical Reflection and Cognition Skills:**

- # Develop counselling skills through application of models of practice, in supervised clinical placements;
- # Critically evaluate different models of practice through theory, observation and participation in genetic counselling interviews;
- # Respect differences in cultural, religious and socioeconomic beliefs in clients, through developing a critical understanding of difference through the literature and personal contact with clients;
- # Develop self-awareness through reflection and active participation in the process of supervision.

#### **Communication Skills:**

- # Analyse the genetic counselling process and the impact on families from a cultural, ethical and psychosocial perspective;
- # Understand and critically analyse the process of transference and counter transference in an interview;
- # Critically analyse the process of communication.

#### **Ethical Skills:**

- # Understand the ethical principles that guide and inform genetic counselling practice;
- # Consider personal, cultural and moral values which may impact on the individual practice of genetic counselling;
- # Recognise the ethical challenges that may confront clients;
- # Understand and identify the potential for ethical challenges in emerging new genetic technologies;
- # Identify possible challenges to facilitating informed consent and maintaining patient confidentiality.

#### **Genetic Skills:**

The curriculum is based on the genetic knowledge requirements of the Human Genetics Society of Australasia Board of Censors for Genetic Counselling, which governs the certification of genetic counsellors in Australia.

In Year One basic biological and genetic precepts, and genetic disease concepts will be taught via a combination of didactic and problem based learning (PBL) methods. Various human genetic conditions will be discussed to illustrate concepts. PBL will be used to facilitate the sharing of information between students and to support the development of group work - which models the work of a genetic counsellor, who works as part of a multidisciplinary team.

- # Understand the principles of inheritance;
- # Understand chromosomal disorders and the genetic basis of disease;
- # Understand clinical genetic risk assessments for patients and families;
- # Elicit and document a family history and family pedigree, convey genetic information and discuss risk;
- # Understand the normal stages of human embryo developments and have an awareness of how this can be disrupted;
- # Understand the role of genetics as the underlying cause of various disorders of the human body;
- # Understand the role of genetics in cancer;
- # Have an appreciation for the range of molecular, cytogenetic and biochemical laboratory tests utilised in clinical genetic practice;
- # Understand the genetic testing approach taken for specific genetic disorders;
- # Understand the treatment approach taken for specific genetic disorders;
- # Understand the issues relating to population based screening;
- # Understand the role of prenatal screening and testing in pregnancy management and care, and the options available when fetal abnormality is detected;
- # Understand the organisational and economic aspects of health care in Australia;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># Understand the role of the genetic counsellor in the context of the multidisciplinary approach to clinical genetic health care;</li> <li># Understand the principles of the legal and professional duties and the responsibilities of genetic counsellors as health professionals and members of a health care team.</li> </ul>																								
<b>Course Structure &amp; Available Subjects:</b>	.																								
<b>Majors/Minors/ Specialisations</b>	.																								
<b>Subject Options:</b>	<p>.</p> <p><b>First Year:</b> Students will complete the following seven core subjects. An exit point of the Graduate Diploma in Genetic Counselling is available after completion of Year One.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Study Period Commencement:</th> <th>Credit Points:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SCWK90047 Research Processes</td> <td>May, September</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENE90003 Counselling Skills</td> <td>Semester 1</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENE90004 Health Communication Skills 1</td> <td>Semester 1</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENE90001 Human Genetics and Genetic Counselling 1</td> <td>Semester 1</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENE90005 Genetic Counselling in the Community</td> <td>Semester 2</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PAED90016 Health Communication Skills 2</td> <td>Semester 2</td> <td>12.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GENE90002 Clinical Genetics</td> <td>Semester 2</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Year Two:</b> Details of applicable subjects will be released prior to commencement of study period in 2009.</p>	Subject	Study Period Commencement:	Credit Points:	SCWK90047 Research Processes	May, September	12.50	GENE90003 Counselling Skills	Semester 1	12.50	GENE90004 Health Communication Skills 1	Semester 1	12.50	GENE90001 Human Genetics and Genetic Counselling 1	Semester 1	12.50	GENE90005 Genetic Counselling in the Community	Semester 2	12.50	PAED90016 Health Communication Skills 2	Semester 2	12.50	GENE90002 Clinical Genetics	Semester 2	25
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<b>Entry Requirements:</b>	<p>The applicant's ability to pursue successfully the the course using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># Possession of a University-recognised undergraduate degree;</li> <li># In the event of applicants not having an undergraduate degree, but who have relevant professional experience deemed to equate to undergraduate studies in cognate areas will be considered;</li> <li># Personal statement of 1000 words submitted with application, explaining relevant experience (either paid or voluntary) and reasons for applying;</li> </ul> <p>Preference in selection will be given to students who have completed a cognate subject such as human genetics, biochemistry, cell biology, physiology to second year (depending on course content).</p>																								
<b>Core Participation Requirements:</b>	<p>For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills and Assessment Requirements of this entry. The University is dedicated to provide support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website : <a href="http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/">http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/</a></p>																								
<b>Graduate Attributes:</b>	.																								
<b>Generic Skills:</b>	<p>The Master of Genetic Counselling is designed to enable students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># Gain clarification from the professional Board of Censors in Genetic Counselling (Human Genetics Society of Australia) to practise as a professional genetic counsellor in Australasia;</li> <li># Learn the scope of practice and models of practice of genetic counselling through taught theory, relevant literature, and supervised clinical placements in order to practice genetic counselling in Australia and internationally;</li> </ul>																								

- # Learn the relevant core concepts of genetics as applied to the practice of genetic counselling;
- # Reflect on the ethical and personal implications of knowledge taught, to develop self awareness;
- # Develop the skills to formulate research projects within a clinical genetics setting;
- # Develop skills to communicate genetic information effectively within a genetics consultation, understanding the relevance of culture and psychosocial indicators consistent with their professional code of ethics;
- # Develop skills skills to work effectively in a multidisciplinary professional team and to udnerstand the scope of practice and models of practice of the profession of genetic counselling;
- # Understand the theories and principles of counselling and to be able to effectively use these within a genetic consultation to enable decision making and the transfer of relevant genetic information;
- # Understand the relevance of community resources;
- # Understand the rationale and principles of genetic predictive testing programs, and community access to these programs.