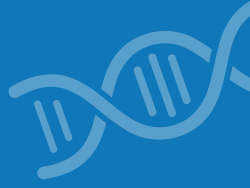




A career as a **Genetic Counsellor**



Are you looking for a rewarding, interesting and stimulating career in a quickly evolving area of science? If yes then becoming a Genetic Counsellor within NSW Health could be the role for you.



What is a Genetic Counsellor?

Genetic Counsellors are allied health professionals who work as part of a skilled team delivering personalised information and risk assessments to patients and their families with, or at risk of genetic conditions. Genetic counselling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological, and familial implications of the genetic contributions to disease. The role of a Genetic Counsellor allows individuals to make informed decisions about their health.

Genetic Counsellors are trained in both medical genetics and counselling to interpret family history information and genetic test results and present complex information to families in a way that is meaningful to them. This may include how genetic conditions might affect them or their families or what the chance might be for future generations. Genetic Counsellors provide psychosocial support to families to help them with making decisions about their genetic health, understanding their genetic test result, adapting to genetic diagnoses and accessing additional support services. They are trained to present complex information about genetic diagnosis, risk to family members, genetic testing and the impact of a diagnosis to families and patients. They also discuss available options and can provide referrals to educational services, advocacy and support groups, other health professionals, and community or state services.



Genetics or Genomics?

Historically, genetic testing could only be performed on one gene at a time, whereas now genomic testing allows testing of all genes in one test. Genomic testing allows analysis of how genes interact with each other and how this can influence an individual's health outcomes by allowing access to early screening and/or personalised treatment as a result.



Where do Genetic Counsellors work?

Many Genetic Counsellors working in NSW Health work as part of a skilled team within Clinical Genetics Services in certain public hospitals. Genetic Counsellors can also specialise in specific areas of healthcare which may include but are not limited to:

- Oncology
- Preconception and Prenatal
- Cardiology
- Neurology
- Research
- Laboratory



Future for Genetic Counsellors

The role of the Genetic Counsellor is quickly evolving as technological advances allow genetic testing to be offered to a growing number of patients and their families. Working as a Genetic Counsellor within NSW Health will allow you to be at the cutting edge of the genomic revolution in healthcare.



How do I become a Genetic Counsellor?

To work as a Genetic Counsellor in Australia you will need to complete a two year master's course in Genetic Counselling which has been accredited by Human Genetics Society of Australia (HGSA). As at October 2020 there are two Universities offering the accredited Masters in Genetic Counselling in Australia, one in NSW at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) www.uts.edu.au/future-students/find-a-course/master-genetic-counselling And the other in Victoria at the University of Melbourne study.unimelb.edu.au/find/courses/graduate/master-of-genetic-counselling/

Entry requirements to these courses are stipulated by the associated universities and will likely require an undergraduate degree in a science subject as well as relevant work experience. Please review the current specific entry requirements for each course directly with the associated university.

Graduates from the accredited master's course are then eligible to work as Associate Genetic Counsellors while they work towards becoming certified genetic counsellors by HGSA.



Career Path

Graduation from a recognised undergraduate Bachelors degree*



Relevant work experience*

Accredited master's course in Genetic Counselling (2 years)

Eligibility to work as an Associate Genetic Counsellor in Australia

2 years



(certification submission with HGSA)

Certified Genetic Counsellor

Helpful resources

- HGSA: www.hgsa.org.au/resources/careers-in-genetics-and-genomics
- NSW Map My Health Career: <https://www.mapmycareer.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/specialty-details.aspx?specialty=7§ion=us>
- What is a Genetic Counsellor (Cancer): <https://education.eviq.org.au/podcasts-videos/podcasts/episode-6-shining-a-light-on-cancer-genetics>

* please refer to individual entry requirements for accredited master's course for more information