

Introduction to GCRB

The Genetic Counsellor Registration Board (GCRB) sets and monitors standards in the UK & Republic of Ireland, for entry into the genetic counselling profession, registration of genetic counsellors, maintenance of registration and disciplinary proceedings.

The GCRB register has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under its Accredited Registers programme. Accreditation means that the GCRB has met the PSA's demanding standards in the following areas: governance, setting standards, education and training, managing the register, providing information and complaints handling.

Employing a genetic counsellor

Registered Genetic Counsellors

When recruiting a genetic counsellor it is important to check if the applicant has registered with the GCRB. The Register on the GCRB website gives you access to a list of genetic counsellors who have met the standards for registration.

Registered Genetic Counsellors maintain their status by:

- paying an annual subscription fee
- attending regular genetic counselling supervision
- validating their registration every 5 years by the submission to the GCRB of two references and a continuous professional development (CPD) log (CPD requirements – an minimum of 150 hours over 5 years, 50% of which must be external to their organisation)

The GCRB will inform the line manager of any lapses in registration.

A registrant whose fitness to practise is under question should be referred to the GCRB. To raise a concern about a Registered Genetic Counsellor click here.

Non-Registered Genetic Counsellors

If you are employing a genetic counsellor, who is not currently registered with the GCRB it would be useful to check if the applicant is eligible to register. Genetic counsellors who are not yet registered can request a [certificate of eligibility](#) from the GCRB to demonstrate to potential employers that they are eligible to register pending successful submission of a portfolio of evidence and relevant fees.

If you have employed a non-registered genetic counsellor, who is eligible to register, they will need support from their employer to complete the [portfolio](#) of evidence and gain relevant experience. Genetic counsellors are eligible to submit their portfolio for GCRB Registration after working two years full time equivalent, following completion of the educational qualifications for eligibility to register.

During this training period, genetic counsellors need to see a wide variety of genetic cases to complete their case log, including general genetic cases, prenatal cases and cancer cases. They need to attend regular counselling supervision. They need to meet the [GCRB CPD guidelines](#). Their portfolio work needs to be supervised by a [GCRB trained mentor](#).

Currently in the UK most genetic counsellors work in regional genetic services. These services have a team of genetic counsellors and doctors and the training needs of aspirant genetic counsellors can usually be met in these centres.

The GCRB recognises that genetic counsellors are now increasingly being employed outside of regional genetic services. For trainee genetic counsellors it can be difficult to complete their GCRB portfolios in these settings without support from their employers.

The following list provides details what this involves:

- The genetic counsellor will need a GCRB trained sign-off mentor (SOM) to support them as they work on their portfolio. It is the responsibility of the genetic counsellor to find a SOM. The GCRB website provides details of trained SOMs.
- Trainee Genetic counsellors will need to attend external conferences during their training period – they need 60 hours of CPD over a two-year period, and 50% of these hours must be external to their organisation.
- They will need to be released from work to attend multi-disciplinary team meetings (MDTs), monthly genetic counselling supervision and to observe and to participate in clinics and in the activities of a regional genetics services in order to gain the required breadth and depth of clinical experience to successfully register with the GCRB.
- The GCRB SOM they are working with will require an honorary contract with the genetic counsellor's Trust or Health Board in order to observe consultations and review their clinic notes.
- The GCRB trained SOM or the [GCRB](#) can advise the genetic counsellor and their line manager of the specific requirements.

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There are potential risks for the employer to consider when employing a genetic counsellor who neither registered nor eligible to register with the GCRB. Please see the [Professional Standards Authority](#) website.

Registered genetic counsellors have been assessed by the GCRB as meeting the required standards of personal behaviour, technical competence and professional practice, which provides assurance for maintaining standards of patient safety and service quality. In addition there is ongoing monitoring of standards through revalidation every five years and the GCRB can investigate any complaints regarding fitness to practice.

If you have any queries please contact the GCRB administrator at enquiries@gcrb.org.uk