

# Genetic counsellors registration/certification in South Africa

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## About HPCSA

The Health Professions Council of South Africa is a statutory body, established in terms of the Health Professions Act and is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions.



### Overview

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## Overview

The HPCSA, in conjunction with its 12 Professional Boards, is committed to promoting the health of the population, determining standards of professional education and training, and setting and maintaining excellent standards of ethical and professional practice.

In order to safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions with which Council is concerned.

The Council guides and regulates the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to **registration**, education and training, **professional conduct** and ethical behaviour, ensuring continuing professional development, and fostering compliance with healthcare standards. All individuals who practise any of the health care professions incorporated in the scope of the HPCSA are obliged by the **Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974** to register with the Council. Failure to do so constitutes a criminal offence.





# HPCSA Mandate

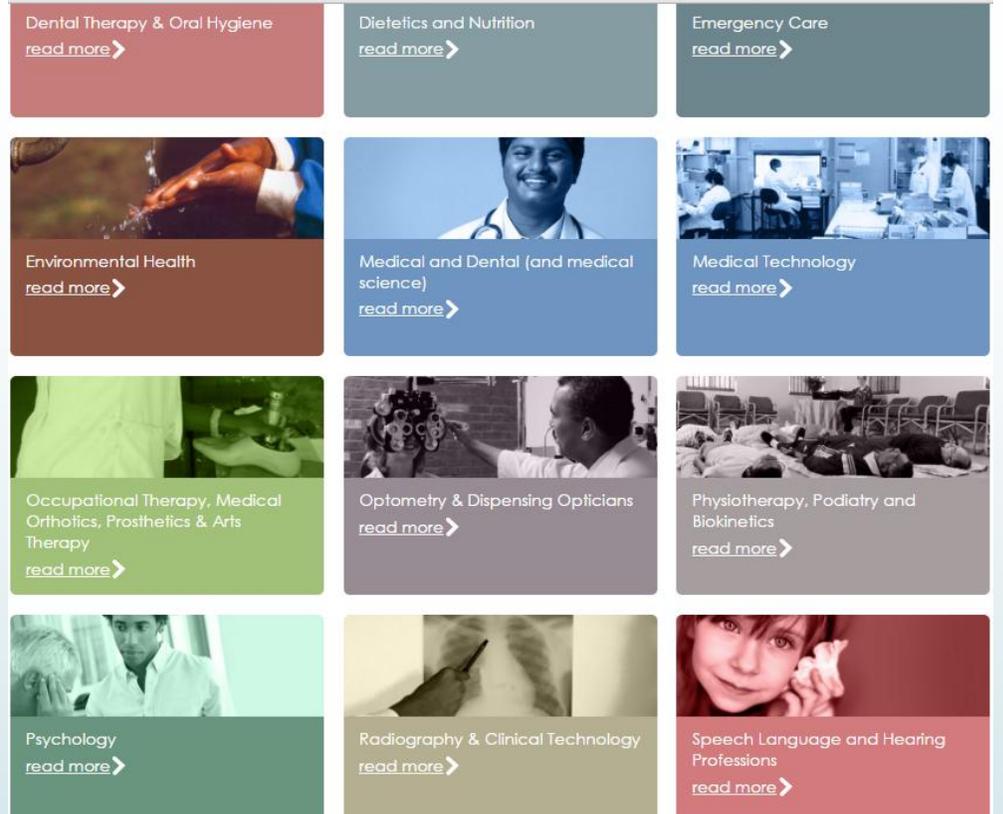
Promoting the health of the population and determining standards

Guiding and regulating the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to

- ▶ Registration,
- ▶ Education and training
- ▶ Professional conduct and
- ▶ Ethical behavior
- ▶ Continuing professional development
- ▶ Fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

# HPCSA Boards

- 12 professional boards
- Genetic Counsellor under
  - Medical and dental**
  - Medical Science**
    - Genetic Counsellors
    - Medical Physicists
    - Medical Biological Scientists
    - ~~Biomedical Engineers (register closed for new registrations)~~
    - ~~Clinical Biochemists (register closed for new registrations)~~







# Genetic Counsellors - Independent Practice

- ▶ Register established in 1996 – 10 scientists who worked in the field
- ▶ 1998 - First Masters trained genetic counsellor
- ▶ Currently 28 on register
  - ▶ Not all currently in South Africa
  - ▶ Not all practising
  - ▶ State – 8
  - ▶ Private – 4
  - ▶ Industry - 2

# Standards of practice

- Genetic Counsellors South Africa (GCSA) developed
- Formal approval by the board in 2014
- Provides practice guidelines
- In the process of being updated
  - Ethical guidelines
  - Reciprocity with Europe

## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR GENETIC COUNSELLORS

May 2013

Compiled by:



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## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR GENETIC COUNSELLORS

May 2013

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# Competencies

- ▶ A. Discipline Specific Knowledge (Genetic, Scientific, Medical and Counselling knowledge)
- ▶ B. Communication Skills
- ▶ C. Critical-Thinking Skills
- ▶ D. Interpersonal, Counselling and Psychosocial Assessment Skills
- ▶ E. Professional Ethics and Values
- ▶ F. Computer Literacy
- ▶ G. Research Competency



# Assessment process

Submission of a Portfolio of evidence for assessment

- ▶ **Section 1: Intern Programme**
- ▶ **Section 2: Logbook**
  - ▶ A summary of the patient logbook - A minimum of 150 in prenatal, paediatric, and adult genetics.
- ▶ **Section 3: Discipline specific knowledge**
  - ▶ Evidence of genetic, scientific, medical and counselling knowledge.
- ▶ **Section 4: Assignments**
  - ▶ Evidence of problem based learning (PBL), presentations, tests and examinations.
- ▶ **Section 5: Ongoing Assessments**
  - ▶ Self-assessments
  - ▶ Trainer's and supervisor's appraisals
  - ▶ Three written case reports (2000-3000 words) highlighting an ethical, medical and psychosocial issue respectively.
  - ▶ A reflective piece (2000-3000 words) based on a recording (voice or video)
- ▶ **Section 6: Research experience**
  - ▶ Abstract of the research report
- ▶ **Section 7: Final assessment by training facility**
- ▶ **Section 8: Evaluation of the intern experience**

# Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

- ▶ Continually update professional knowledge and skills
- ▶ Continuing Professional Development programme
- ▶ 30 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) per twelve-month period
- ▶ Five of the units must be on ethics, human rights and medical law
- ▶ 24 months

**HPCSA** 15  
CEUs



# SA, UK, Australia – Reciprocity

- ▶ Applications from foreign individuals to work as Genetic Counsellors in South Africa
- ▶ Applications from South African Genetic Counsellors to the UK or Australia
- ▶ **The agreement:**
  - ▶ work in South Africa for a period of six months under the supervision of a registered genetic counsellor.
  - ▶ Counselling supervision with an appropriately trained supervisor,
  - ▶ Individual and group supervision in accordance with the UK guidelines
  - ▶ Evidence of 6 month work experience
  - ▶ Evidence of counselling supervision
  - ▶ Written piece comparing genetic counselling practice between the home country and South Africa
  - ▶ Three references
- ▶ Newly qualified genetic counsellors will be required to complete an additional 12 month internship. Genetic Counsellors with 2 or more years of experience will not be required to do any additional internship training.



## About Us

The GC-SA is an informal subgroup of the SASHG that are dedicated to promoting the Genetic Counselling profession in South Africa.

## Our Goals

- Increase awareness of the Genetic Counselling Profession in South Africa and Internationally
- Maintain a high standard of training that remains internationally recognised
- Continue the development of qualified genetic counsellors
- Dedication to research in South Africa
- Accessibility of genetic counselling to all communities in South Africa
- Good quality service standards - professional guidelines, advice and support for practicing genetic counsellors
- Active dialogue of relevant topics that impact genetic counselling – human genetics, genetic testing, bioethics, funding
- Advocates for patients and their support groups



## Southern African Society for Human Genetics

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The Southern African Society for Human Genetics (SASHG) is a non-profit organization for health care professionals involved and interested in human or medical genetics.

### Our aims are

- to promote and advance the practice and science of human and medical genetics in Southern Africa
- to facilitate contact between persons in the different branches of human and medical genetics
- to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards in all its affairs and activities
- to arrange conferences and symposia
- to initiate contact with similar organizations in other parts of the world
- to practice its affairs in a non-profit making and non-discriminatory manner

### Current Committee (2015-2017)

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## Committee

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## Certification

- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Document: Genetic Counselling
- HPCSA: Standards of Practice (SOP) for Genetic Counsellors (PDF)
- Internship Training Document: Included in the SOP for Genetic Counsellors
- HPCSA: Qualification for Registration of Medical Scientist (PDF)
- HPCSA: Qualification for Registration of Interns in Medical Science (PDF)
- HPCSA: Registration of Students on Medical Science (PDF)
- Board of Healthcare Funders (PCNS): Registration for Practice Number (PDF)