

TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR GENETIC COUNSELING



The training of French Genetic Counsellors: a 12-year experience

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The French Training Program, key points:

Co-direction:

- ❖ Pr Nicole PHILIP, Medical Genetics and Prenatal Diagnosis
- ❖ Pr Hagay SOBOL, Cancer Genetics

Frequency:

yearly

Duration: 2 years, full time

Number of students accepted: about 15 yearly (12-20)

Entry criteria (about 60 applicants/y):

- ❖ Licence, Master, PhD in biological/equivalent sciences (majority)
- ❖ Nurses, Midwives, medical students
- ❖ Students in Psychology or equivalent

Selection (about 30 interviews/y):

- ❖ Based on application files
- ❖ Interviews (Program's directors, genetic counsellors, psychologists)

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The beginning of the profession in France

2004: Genetic counsellors legally recognized as health professionals
(Law of Public Health 2004)

----- > **Creation of the profession**

2005: MSc in Genetic Counselling and Predictive Medicine
Aix-Marseille University, Marseille, South-East of France

----- > **June 2005: first 8 French Genetic Counsellors graduate**



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The French Training Program, key points:

Course description:

❖ Taught modules, mandatory + optional (19 weeks, 72 credits)

- Human and Clinical Genetics, Prenatal Genetics, Cancer Genetics, Neurogenetics, Endocrinology, Pediatrics, Cardiogenetics
- Laboratory main techniques
- Counseling skills/psychology (theory and role plays)
- Medical ethics (based on articles)

❖ Clinical placements (28 weeks, 48 credits), in France or abroad

- Medical genetics/Prenatal Diagnosis
- Cancer Genetics
- Laboratory (non scientific students)

❖ Research project/dissertation

- Subject chosen during placement

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The beginning of the profession in France

Decree 2007: « a genetic counsellor practicing in France must have a Master's Degree from the French Training Program (or an equivalent Genetic Counselling Master's Degree, if not French) »

----- > **In 2016, every GC in France is educated at a Master level**



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Current development:

What's new in September 2016 ?

Creation of a new module (1 week, full time):

Principles and applications of Next-Generation-Sequencing (NGS) in Medical Genetics

- ❖ NGS technologies (exome, all genome, gene panels)
- ❖ Application into clinics
- ❖ Medical ethics (based on published articles)

Objective: to give futur genetic counsellors a specific training in genomics

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Evaluation of the training program:

At a national level:

- ❖ Master assessed every 4 years by the *Evaluation of Research and higher Education Agency (AERES)*

-----> **Higher distinction A+ in 2012**

At a European level:

- ❖ Assesment by the *European Board of Medical Genetics (EBMG)*, 2012

-----> The program fulfills the European Core Curriculum for Master's programs in genetic counselling

French genetic counsellors eligible for European Registration after two years of clinical practice

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A Genetic Counsellor

is like air conditioning,
when you do not have it, you are on track ,
but when you have it, you cannot live without !



**Thank you
for your
attention**

**Any
questions?**

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What students do after the course:

Employment: majority of graduates go on to work in French Public Health Genetics Services:

- ❖ Prenatal Diagnosis/Medical Genetics
- ❖ Cancer Genetics
- ❖ Reference Centres for Rare Diseases: cardiology, neurology, metabolic diseases, Marfan disease,...

Countries:

- ❖ France and French oversea territories (Martinique, Guadeloupe, La Réunion)
- ❖ Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, NYC (NY MSc), Singapore

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What students do after the course:

Workforce: 165 GC obtained the French certificate (12% of men)

- ❖ 25% already had a professional background
 - 10 nurses
 - 10 midwives
 - 13 PhD
 - 2 pharmacists
 - 5 Clinical Research Associates
 - 2 laboratory operators
- ❖ 75% had an initial training (licence, master)

Thesis: 5 GCs passed a PhD in Genetic Counselling, while working

European Certification: 5 in 2014, 3 in 2015

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