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## *Frequently Asked Questions*

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**Q:** *What qualification do I need to be eligible to do the degree and occasional courses?*

A: You need a NQF level 8 qualification in the biological or social sciences with an average of 65% and higher. Knowledge of genetics is essential. Typically NQF level 8 is a 4-year BSc or a Hons degree. You need to obtain a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) certificate or other proof that confirms that your qualification is at this level. You can contact SAQA via their website, [www.SAQA.org](http://www.SAQA.org). This can take a couple of months so do this ASAP!

**Q:** *What do I need to do to be able to practice as a genetic counsellor?*

A: To practice as a genetic counsellor you need to be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPSCA). This involves completing a 24-month internship. Of this, 12 months of the internship overlaps with the second year of study of the degree.

**Q:** *How much does the degree/ occasional modules cost?*

A: The fees are available on the UCT website. You can access this at <http://www.students.uct.ac.za/students/study/handbooks/current#fees> [handbook](#)

**Q:** *What can I do to strengthen my chances of being accepted?*

A: Experience working with people is helpful. Personal growth courses or other activities that allow for emotional intelligence and self-awareness is to your advantage. Speaking more than one language, English, Afrikaans, African languages, in Western Cape in particular, isiXhosa. If you are able to job shadow so that you get a clear understanding what the profession entails this will be to your advantage.

**Q:** *Are there any funding opportunities available?*

A: The University of Cape Town has student bursaries. You can visit the website to learn more. The NRF and MRC also have student bursaries

**Q:** *I would like to job shadow a genetic counsellor, is that possible?*

A: Job shadowing is an option and should be arranged directly with the genetic counsellors or units at UCT, Tygerberg and Wits/NHLS.

**Q:** *What job opportunities are available?*

A: Genetic counselling is a rapidly growing field, and more opportunities are becoming available. However there is still a shortage of full-time positions.

**Q:** *How do you suggest potential applicants get shadowing experience considering the new restrictions with POPI Act?*

A: Some institutions allow for shadowing opportunities such as Groote Schuur and Tygerberg Hospital. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement before sitting in with a GC at the clinics or with online sessions.

**Q:** *On average, how many applicants versus acceptance do you have per year?*

A: 2-4 students are taken per year. Applicants range from 40-50. This is why it is important to ensure that your marks are higher than the minimum of 65%.

**Q:** *Should I have a letter of reference or only contact details of referees?*

A: It is preferable to have a letter of reference but contact details are also fine. We do contact references so make sure you have the correct information.

**Q:** *Will the Occasional courses be offered next year?*

A: Yes, we will be offering the occasional courses. These will be online with the lecture weeks on campus. The entry requirements are the same as for the fulltime degree. The closing date for registrations are December.

**Q:** *Where can I find more information on Genetic Counselling?*

A: There is an online Coursera course that you may be interested in.