



New part-time course in Human Genetics

Introduction to the “Principles of Genetic Counselling” semester course

The UCT Division of Human Genetics is offering a 6 month part-time course (10 credits) on the "*Principles of Genetic Counselling: Course work*" starting in April 2014 (course code LAB5012F).

Following registration, successful participants will be given access to Vula where reading materials, lectures and assignments will be posted on a regular basis. The face-to-face part of the course will take place in the Division of Human Genetics from **Monday 31/03/2014 at 9am to 5pm, every day, until Friday 11/04/2014 (2 weeks full-time)**. Some lectures and workshops will also be presented by the UCT Palliative Care Division; for eg : surrounding general communication skills theory, issues around children, loss, grief and bereavement. All lectures will take place at the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences.

The Broad Course Outline for this Introduction to Genetic Counselling & Human Genetics course is that:

Genetic counselling is the process of helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. This process provides individuals and their families with information about genetic conditions, availability of diagnostic testing, and risks to other family members within a framework of non-directive counselling and ethical principles.

The Aim is that participants will be able to:

Broaden their knowledge of the principles of Genetic Counselling and be given the opportunity to apply the theory that supports Genetic Counselling, in their own clinical practice.

It needs to be noted that this does not mean that participants will be Genetic Counsellors or in fact be legally able to offer Genetic Counselling professionally, as is clearly outlined in the HPCSA Scope of Practice for Registered Genetic Counsellors.

http://www.hpcsa.co.za/board_meddent_education.php & also <http://www.geneticcounselling.co.za/>

A full-time, 2 year MSc in Genetic Counselling programme by course work and research is offered at UCT (186 credits). This needs to be followed by a 1 year internship at an accredited facility before one can register with the HPCSA as a Genetic Counsellor.

This new part-time course (semester course) described here, is designed to broaden other Healthcare Professional's knowledge about Human Genetics and gain insight into the theory that supports the process of Genetic Counselling. The credits from this course can also be used towards the full-time programme, within a 5 year period.

Given the scarcity of posts for Genetic Counsellors in the Western Cape, this course is designed to task-share/shift this vital aspect of a comprehensive genetic service by “upskilling” other Healthcare Professionals.

Who should apply: This new course is aimed at individuals who hold a MBChB degree (medical doctors who wish to increase their counselling skills rather than in medical genetics); registered nurses and midwives who have a four-year diploma in nursing and midwifery plus at least one post-basic diploma and relevant experience; other Healthcare Professionals, who in any other manner have attained a level of competence, which, in the opinion of the Senate, is adequate for the purpose of admission as a candidate and has satisfied the Senate that she/he has the necessary background and training to undertake the approved programme of work (ie RPL) for this level 9-standard post graduate programme **in order to be issued with a certificate indicating that they have successfully completed the course for which they will receive 10 credits from UCT.**

Course Outcomes:

A sound understanding of the purpose of genetic counselling;
Ability to describe the structure of a genetic counselling session;
Describe and critically evaluate the range of genetic counselling techniques used in practice;
Describe the scope of genetic counselling;
Perform risk assessment of inherited disorders;
Pedigree drawing;
Communication skills;
Discuss ethical considerations in the field of Genetics;
Discuss different settings in which Genetic Counsellors practice.

General Information for Registrants:

There will be online assessments/tests on Vula, both on the pre-reading matter, which will be uploaded and accessible from March, as well as on the lecture content from April which will be covered in the 2 weeks face-to-face period (31 March-11 April, 2014).

From March till May there will be various assignments and assessments that will need to be completed via Vula (online) which will make up 20% of the final mark, together with the test marks.

There will be a final written exam (3 hour) in June 2014 (13/06/2014) which will make up 80% of the final mark and for which the participants will need to obtain a 50% pass mark in order to be issued with a certificate indicating that they have successfully completed the course (level 9) for which they will receive 10 credits from UCT, in July 2014.

During the 6 month semester period (January-June 2014), participants will be registered as "occasional students" at UCT, HSF and will have access to various facilities on the Health Sciences Campus; there will be on and off site access to the Medical Library, regular email notification of lectures on campus and registered students will also have access to and be able to attend CPD accredited lectures and courses. These could also include CPD accredited lectures/workshops for which Ethics related CPD points will be issued. These will not necessarily be in the Division but CPD points are issued by the HPCSA and not UCT so it does not matter where they are acquired from.

What is new, is that the UCT Division of Human Genetics is offering this 6 month course, starting in January 2014 (which carries 10 credits), as a stand-alone course for personal development of Healthcare Professionals

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