

## European registration process - Guidelines for applicants

### Key dates for registration process

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### Key dates for Genetic Nurse and Genetic Counsellor Registration process

Applicants should submit their Intention to register in the [online submission platform](#) between **15th July 2016 – 15th September 2016**.

*Applications received after midnight (CET) on 15th September 2016 will not be accepted and the applicant will have to resubmit the following year. Applications for 2016 will not be accepted after this date.*

The EBMG will review the submission and inform applicants of their **eligibility status** by midnight (CET) **on 30th October 2016**.

Final date for EBMG to receive full applications is **15th January 2017**.

Decisions will be made and communicated to applicants by **1st April 2017**.

If you are applying under GFC and need to perform a **Genetic science exam** it is performed online in **April each year**.

If you are asked to make minor changes, these should be made and the application resubmitted by **1st September 2017**.

If you are asked to make major changes, these should be submitted by **15th January 2018** and a further fee will have to be paid.

#### Section 1. Eligibility to register

It is an educational standard that all registered genetic counsellors and registered genetic nurses should be educated at Master level: for genetic counsellors this should be a Master degree in genetic counselling and for genetic nurses a Master degree in genetic nursing. Master level degrees for training and education of genetic counsellors and genetic nurses should comply with the recommended [core curriculum](#). A list of the Master level courses offered in Europe and approved by the EBMG can be found under the Normal route section. Graduates of the Master level courses that do not comply with the EBMG core curriculum may not be eligible for registration, or may be asked to complete additional practical experience or provide additional proof of competence (above what is normally required) before they can be registered. Potential applicants who may fall into these groups should contact the EBMG Genetic Nurse and Genetic Counsellor Division to discuss their own situation.

At present, applicants who do not have a Master's degree in the required subject may be eligible to apply [via the Grandfather Clause](#). Applications under the grandfather clause who work in a country where there is an approved Master course will not be accepted after 2018. Applicants who work in a country without an approved Master course will be able to use the grandfather clause to apply until and including 2020.

## **Section 2. Practical clinical experience**

As a new graduate does not have the competence to work autonomously as a genetic counsellor or genetic nurse within the multi-disciplinary team, a period of two years (or equivalent if the practitioner works part-time) of practice within a genetic healthcare environment should precede registration. This will enable practitioners to develop the competences required by the EBMG. This practice could be undertaken in one or more departments, as long as the practitioner was involved in provision of genetic counselling.

**Example 1.** An applicant works 35 hours per week in a public genetics service for 2 years. He spends 80% of his time providing direct patient care and 20% of his time doing research related to genetic counselling. He would be eligible to apply for registration after 2 years.

**Example 2.** An applicant works half time in a genetic service providing patient care. He would be eligible after 4 years of practice.

**Example 3.** An applicant works full time in a university hospital. For 40% of the time he teaches genetic counselling, for the remaining 60% of his time he provides genetic counselling to patients. He would be eligible for registration after 2 years.

Potential applicants who are not certain of their own situation requiring the amount of time in practice should contact the EBMG Genetic Nurse and Counsellor Division to discuss this.

Registrants who practice within one specialist area of genetics (for example, oncogenetics or cardiogenetics) will be required to have some experience in general genetics and include at least ten cases outside their specialisation in the [case log](#). If this is not possible due to the legal limitations in some countries, practitioners who have previous general experience may

still be able to apply: they should contact the EBMG to discuss this before submitting their intention to register form.

### **Section 3. Routes of access to the register**

#### **3.1 Normal route**

All genetic nurses and genetic counsellors educated at Master level in a course approved by the EBMG as complying with the recommended [core curriculum](#).

The EBMG Genetic Nurse and Genetic Counsellor Division have reviewed the curricula of European Master's programmes to assess whether the programmes comply with the European core curriculum for genetic counsellors.

**Form A** is provided to illustrate the information required by the EBMG when approval is requested. If you are a course director and you wish to apply for approval of your Master programme, please contact the EBMG ([gngc@ebmg.eu](mailto:gngc@ebmg.eu)) to request a version of this form in MS Word format. You will be asked to complete that and email the form to the EBMG with the appropriate additional course documents.

The following programmes comply fully with the core curriculum and are suitable training programmes for European genetic counsellors:

- Cardiff University, UK (to be re-assess 2017)
- University of Manchester, UK (to be re-assess 2017)
- Université de la Méditerranée - Aix Marseille II, Marseilles, France (to be re-assess 2020)
- Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain (to be re-assess 2020).
- Professionalizing Master Course on Genetic Counselling at ICBAS, Universidade do Porto, Portugal (to be re-assess 2017)
- MSc in Genetic Counselling at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania (to be re-asses 2017). Students who pass this course **and undertake the additional student placement** offered by the programme will be eligible to register as genetic counsellors with the EBMG.

Courses are re-assessed on a three yearly basis (**Form B**).

#### **3.2 Eligibility under the Grandfather clause**

There are a number of experienced health professionals who do not have a Master level degree currently working as genetic counsellors. Genetic counsellors and genetic nurses working in a country where there was no current system of registration on 1st June, 2013 may

apply for registration using the Grandfather clause. Applications under the Grandfather clause who work in a country where there is an approved Master course will not be accepted after September, 2018. Applicants who work in a country without an approved Master course will not be able to use the Grandfather clause to apply after September, 2020.

Please note that the assessment for eligibility to register will be based on the work carried out by the applicant, rather than the professional title or background. Only those applicants who fulfil the criteria for working as a genetic counsellor or genetic nurse will be accepted.

***Applicants from countries where a national registration system existed before 1st June 2013 (e.g. UK) will not be eligible for European registration via the grandfather clause.***

The following options are available:

#### **Grandfather Clause A (GFA)**

Genetic counsellors who have completed a two-year Master degree in genetic counselling (which included appropriate periods of practice placements) and have worked as a genetic counsellor for at least three years full time (or equivalent part-time) are eligible for European registration after completing a reduced portfolio. This will comprise 2 references from the senior colleague and the line manager, a case log of 50 cases (verified by a senior colleague), and the CPD record.

#### **Grandfather Clause B (GFB)**

Genetic counsellors who have undertaken a specific course in genetic counselling (other than an EBMG approved two year Master degree) and have worked as a genetic counsellor for at least four years full time (or equivalent part-time) are eligible for European registration after completing a reduced portfolio. This will comprise 2 references from the senior colleague and the line manager, a case log of 50 cases (verified by a senior colleague), two case studies and the CPD record. For example, applicants who completed a one-year Master degree or the national genetic counselling training program in the Netherlands would fit into this category. The Postgraduate Certificate Genetic Healthcare Programme from Plymouth University (UK) is another example of a course already approved as it satisfies the EBMG requirements under Grandfather Clause B. Other genetic counselling courses can be valid as a background for applicants under the GFB clause.

Applicants who use any of these courses to qualify under the GFB clause need to have a total of four years of experience, at least one year of experience must take place after completing the course.

Course directors can apply to have their courses approved for use by applicants applying under the GFB clause ([Form C](#)).

Requirements for genetic counselling course approval as valid for the Grandfather Clause B registration route are:

- Courses are expected to be at postgraduate level and be validated by the host institution.

- Courses need to have a minimum duration of 6 months
- Course structure should include content on counselling skills, human genetics, medical genetics, education and research, psychosocial issues, ethics, law and sociology related to genetic counselling.

The course curriculum can be submitted to the chair and deputy-chairs of the EBMG Genetic Nurse and Genetic Counsellor Professional Branch: [gngc@ebmg.eu](mailto:gngc@ebmg.eu) by email by the 1st of February each year for consideration the ongoing year ([Form C](#)).

### **Grandfather Clause C**

Genetic counsellors who have not undertaken a specific course in genetic counselling and who have completed five years of experience full time (or equivalent part-time) are eligible for European registration after completing a full portfolio and a written multi-choice questionnaire (MCQ) examination to assess knowledge of genetic science. The examination will be conducted online and the applicant must be supervised during the examination by a senior colleague.

### **3.3 Registration by an applicant already registered under an approved national registration system**

Where a rigorous national system of registration exists, practitioners who are already registered and working in Europe for the prescribed period may apply for entry onto the European register system without the need for additional assessment. They will need to submit two references and the evidence of their national registration. Although it is expected them to be undergoing regular relevant CPD, that evidence not need to be submitted.

There are a number of national registration systems that have been assessed and approved by the EBMG. Applicants who have already successfully registered with one of the EBMG approved systems may apply for EBMG registration using their national registration.

Applicants with a national registration must have been working in a genetic counselling (or genetic nursing, if applying for registration as a genetic nurse) role for a minimum of two years (full time work or equivalent period part-time) before they can apply for European registration. At least one year of this clinical experience must have taken place in Europe.

In some cases, additional evidence of competence may be required by the European Board. Conversely, national boards may require additional evidence when registering an applicant who already has European registration. Registration at European level will not supersede local registration systems where those exist.

The systems of national registration that are currently approved by the EBMG are:

- UK - Genetic Counsellor Registration Board,
- USA – American Board of Genetic Counselors,
- Australia – Board of Censors for Genetic Counselling,

- South Africa – Genetic Counselling South Africa,
- Canada – Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors,

Reciprocity with each national system will be **reviewed every 5 years**.

#### **Section 4. Evidences required for the assessment of competences**

Assessment of competence and suitability to be placed on the European register of genetic nurses and counsellors is made by the EBMG Genetic Nurse and Counsellor division. All members of this group are registered and experienced genetic counsellors or genetic nurses. Due to the different needs of each professional group, one part of the register is designated for genetic counsellors and one for genetic nurses.

Where no national registration system exists, an assessment of the individual's competence will be made before they can be registered.

Assessment may differ according to whether the applicant is applying by the normal route or by using a Grandfather Clause. The requirements for each type of applicant are laid out in the following table.

<b>Evidence required</b>						
<b>Type of application</b>	Reference s (2)	Case log of 50 cases signed by manager or senior colleague	Continuing Professional Development Record (CPD) for past 2 years	Case studies (2)	Scientific essays (2)	Geneti c scienc e exam
<b>Normal route</b>	X	X	X	X		
<b>Grandfather clause A</b>	X	X	X			
<b>Grandfather clause B</b>	X	X	X	X		
<b>Grandfather clause C</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>National registration route</b>	X					

Each section of the process below is designed to examine professional ability in relation to the competences for genetic counsellors.

Assessment will be based on the applicant satisfactorily submitting the following:

#### 4.1 Two references

A minimum of two structured references are required for every applicant. The references are used to enable the EBMG to assess whether the applicant is working in a genetic counselling context, has the appropriate competences and is working within [the Code of Practice](#). Hand writing references should be avoided.

One reference should be from a senior colleague, preferably a registered genetic counsellor or registered genetic nurse, or a senior medical geneticist who has worked closely with the applicant for a significant period during the two-year period of preparation for registration.

**This referee should have been present as an observer during at least two consultations undertaken by the counsellor and provide a short report on the counsellor's competence related to those observations.** Confirmation that cases have been observed is not necessary for applicants who already hold an approved national registration.

The first reference **MUST** address the ways in which the applicant:

- a) Works within the European genetic counsellor **Code of Professional Practice**
- b) Manages a clinical caseload
- c) Has access to and uses both [counselling and clinical supervision](#)
- d) Maintains their professional knowledge and skills
- e) Interacts with members of the multi-disciplinary team.

An additional reference is required from the applicant's line manager. Where the line manager does not work in the department with the applicant, a third reference from a senior colleague will be required.

A line manager is the person to whom the professional is directly responsible for their work in the organisation. Normally the line manager would manage the professional's working contract, attend to any issues regarding their work conditions and be the person who approves study leave.

[Form D](#) should be used for the references.

#### 4.2 Case log

Applicant will need to submit a [case log](#) of at least 50 cases to demonstrate he have all of the [required competences](#). The case log must be verified by the line manager or the senior colleague to confirm that the applicant have performed the tasks as stated. [Form E](#) will be used to record the case log.

*Special points to remember:*

- In keeping with the Code of Professional Practice, patient names or identifying details **must not** be used,

- The contact the applicant record with the family must have taken place no more than 3 years before the submission,
- Cases seen by the applicant during the Master's programme cannot be used,
- Applicant should demonstrate each clinical skill in at least 10 cases,
- In each case, applicant should demonstrate at least five clinical skills,
- **If applicant works in a specialised area of genetics, he/she must provide evidence of their work in at least ten cases outside the specialty,**
- You must use a legend to make it clear the type of condition in each case (see example of case log). Please be specific about the case. Rather than 'cardiac' or 'prenatal', you should indicate 'hypertrophic cardiomyopathy' or 'autosomal dominant cardiac arrhythmia' or 'prenatal diagnosis of Niemann Pick'.
- See notes on the different competences required for the case log.

#### **4.3 Continuing Professional Development Record (CPD)**

All registrants must submit the Continuing Professional Development Record showing their Continuing Professional Development activities undertaken in the previous two years (two years before submission date of 15th January). The applicant must have at least 30 hours of continuing education per year. Of these hours, at least 15 hours must be taken via sources external to the department where the applicant works on a daily basis (such as conferences or educational courses). The remaining hours may include: private study of journal articles (up to 5 hours per year), journal clubs, departmental seminars and preparation for teaching. Research is not considered continuing education, although literature reviews to support your research could be counted as study of journal articles.

#### **What can applicants include in the CPD log?**

- Conferences
- Educational courses. Courses undertaken where the applicant is registered as a student at another institution would be regarded as external hours. For example, if an applicant is registered for modules, an MSc or a PhD related to genetic counselling at a university, this is regarded as external hours.
- Departmental seminars
- Journal club
- Webinars
- Private study (for example when preparing a manuscript or preparing for teaching) – up to five hours per year.

### **What is not CPD?**

- Clinical case discussion meetings
- Hours spent teaching others (although preparation time can be used).
- Business meetings
- Multi-disciplinary team meetings.

Registrants must record the date and type of education, but also write reflective comments on what they learnt from the education and how they have integrated that into their practice. Demonstration of integration of the learning into practice is an essential part of the CPD record. For a series of lectures or seminars, please list the actual dates and topics.

Continuing professional development will be recorded on [Form F](#) and should be signed by the departmental manager. [For examples, see this file](#).

### **4.4 Case studies**

Applicants will need to write two case studies. One should focus on your use of counselling skills and the second should focus on ethical aspects of your practice. Each case study is to be between 2000 and 2500 words. The case studies may be written in your preferred language and professionally translated into English (submit both the English version and the original version).

Instructions for writing the case studies are included in [Form G](#). Remember you are using these to demonstrate your competence so it is very important that you show your use of counselling skills in the first case study and his awareness of ethical issues in case management in the second.

All material must be in the applicant's own words and referenced appropriately.

You must make it clear that pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identity of the patient(s).

### **Plagiarism**

When writing case studies, essay or letter for submission, it is very important that you do not commit plagiarism. This is a type of academic dishonesty and a breach of ethical practice. The EBMG takes this very seriously and if you have committed plagiarism applicant may be refused registration, or his registration may be deferred.

Applicant may be committing plagiarism if he:

- Copies text from any other source and do not make it clear it is a quotation

- Include information in the text in his own words that he does not reference.

As a general rule, you can avoid plagiarism by using your own words to explain concepts and by adding references to all key statements in the text. For registration level work, we would not expect applicants to use direct quotes, but if you do then the quotation should be in inverted commas and you must reference the source with author(s), year and page number of the quote after it appears in the text.

There is more information about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it at: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/>

#### **4.5 Scientific essay and letter**

Each applicant will need to submit two short pieces of work to demonstrate scientific knowledge on topics set by the EBMG. It is important that you do not copy material from other sources; you must put the information into your own words.

The first piece of work will be an essay. In the essay, you will be asked to write an explanation of the underlying mutation or abnormality and the method of laboratory testing used to support diagnosis of the condition. All key statements should be referenced. See [Form H](#) for more details.

In the second piece of work, you will be asked to write a letter to a patient, explaining a specific condition.

#### **Topic for this year will be:**

The scientific essay will be on Leber's optic neuropathy

The letter to the patient will be on Klinefelter syndrome in a prenatal setting.

Scenario: You have seen a 38 year old woman, named Julia, in your clinic. She is married with Tom and she is 17 weeks pregnant. It is her first pregnancy and due to an increased risk in the first trimester biochemical screening (1/112), she decided to undergo an invasive prenatal testing (chorionic villus sampling). The results of the fetal karyotype revealed a Klinefelter syndrome (47,XXY) in all the analysed cells. They came to your clinic to know the results and to be counselled in relation to this diagnostic.

#### **4.6 Genetic science exam**

Applicants under **Grandfather C** need to do a written multi-choice questionnaire (MCQ) examination to assess knowledge of genetic science. The examination will be conducted online and the applicant must be supervised during the examination by a senior colleague.

Topics that may be included on the EBMG genetic counsellor science exam are listed in the download section as [Form I](#).

## Section 5. How to apply

Applicants will be asked to submit [online](#) an initial application, giving notification of their wish to register **by 15th September in each year**. The Branch Board will review the submission and inform applicants of their **eligibility status** by midnight (CET) **on 30th October 2016**.

Those who are eligible to apply will be asked to submit their full application **by 15th January midnight** of the following year and will be informed of the outcome of their application **by 1th April**.

Please note the registration assessment will not be possible until payment has been confirmed. As soon as the notification of fee payment is received, applicants are able to upload their full-application into their login area at the online system. **Final date for EBMG to receive full applications is 15th January**.

If applying under GFC applicants need to perform a **Genetic science exam** and it is done online in **April each year**.

Each application will be assessed in detail by at least two members of the Board and discussed at a full Branch Board meeting. Where there is any discrepancy in the assessment between the two assessors, this will be resolved through discussion and consideration by all members. Those applicants who are asked to make minor amendments may resubmit these by 1st September for consideration and no further fee will be charged. Those who need to make major amendments can resubmit on 15th January of the following year and a further application fee will be payable.

If an applicant is not approved for registration after two attempts, further education and training may be suggested before he or she can re-apply. Subsequent applications may have to be based on new cases/case studies.

In a situation where the applicant experiences a serious event that is outside their control and that interrupts their ability to submit the portfolio on time, they may apply to have these circumstances considered. They must inform the Chair of the division as soon as possible of the event and submit evidence to validate their application for an extension of time to submit. Where this is not possible within a reasonable period, they may be granted permission to submit the following year without paying a further fee.

### Format of application

- Please scan each page of the signed case log
- Place all documents into one pdf file
- The file should be labelled with your last name and the date of submission, for example: **Skirton.15Jan2016.pdf**
- Upload the pdf file in your area at [online submission platform](#)

The documents should be in the following order:

1. Front page **(Form J)**
2. References **(Form D)**
3. Case log **(Form E)**
4. Continuing Professional Development record **(Form F)**
5. Case Study 1 **(Form G)**
6. Case Study 2 **(Form G)**
7. Science essay **(Form H)**
8. Patient letter **(Form H)**  
(See the download section at the bottom of the page for templates)

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## Section 6. Fees

Application for registration (Includes assessment and initial five-year registration cost)	€ 200
Application for European registration by a person who is already registered under a recognised national system (Includes assessment and initial five-year registration cost)	€ 80
Renewal of registration for five years	€ 200
Course assessment	€ 300
Renewal of courses accreditation	€ 200

### All fees are payable to the EBMG.

After we make an initial assessment of your intention to register, the ESHG/EBMG office will send you details about how to pay your fee, either by debit/credit card or bank transfer. Those applying for renewal of registration will also be sent details of how to pay.

## Section 7. Maintenance of registration

In most cases, registration will be granted for a period of five years. Registrants will then have to renew registration through submission of a record of continuing professional development (CPD) and two references, one from a senior colleague and one from the line manager. The referees must confirm that the registrant is still working in a role directly relevant to the profession and works within the Code of Professional Practice.

The record of Continuing Professional Development should indicate how the applicant has maintained their learning through at least 30 hours of continuing education per year **(for every**

**year since registration)** irrespective of the hours worked. Of these hours, at least 15 hours per year must be taken via sources external to the department (such as conferences or educational courses). The remaining hours may include: private study of journal articles (up to 5 hours per year), journal clubs, departmental seminars and preparation for teaching.

**Statutory Leave (E.G. Maternity/Long Term Sickness/Sabbatical/Career Break):** If a registrant has been away from the workplace for a statutory reason (e.g. maternity/long term sickness/sabbatical/career break) the EBMG appreciates that it might not be possible to acquire 30 hours of CPD in each year. The total number of CPD hours (**150 hours over 5 years**) is still required to ensure the registrant is maintaining their current knowledge, but the registrant should contact the EBMG to discuss whether the proportion of CPD hours needed per year can be adjusted over the 5-year period.

#### **What can applicants include in the CPD log?**

- Conferences
- Educational courses. Courses undertaken where the applicant is registered as a student at another institution would be regarded as external hours. For example, if an applicant is registered for modules, an MSc or a PhD related to genetic counselling at a university, this is regarded as external hours.
- Departmental seminars
- Journal club
- Webinars
- Private study (for example when preparing a manuscript or preparing for teaching) – up to five hours per year.

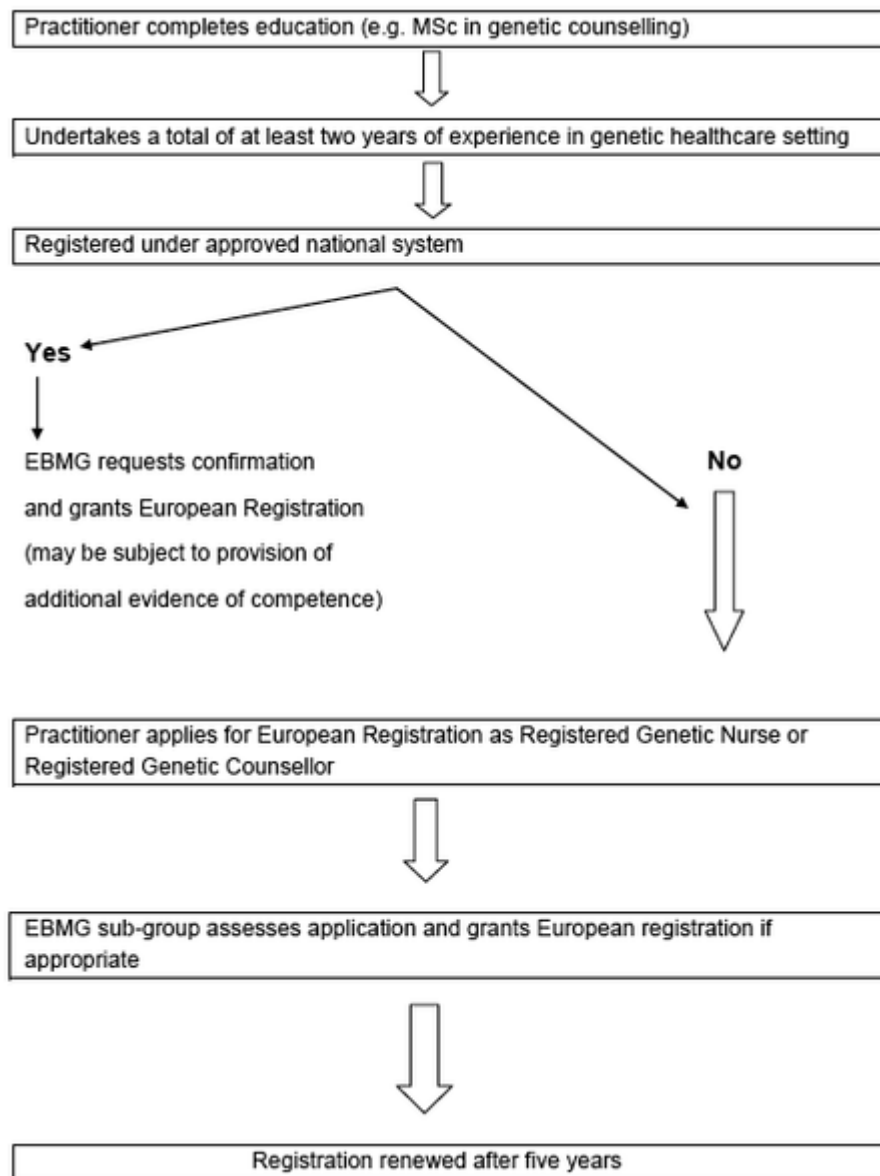
#### **What is not CPD?**

- Clinical case discussion meetings
- Hours spent teaching others (although preparation time can be used).
- Business meetings
- Multi-disciplinary team meetings.

Registrants must record the date and type of education, but also write reflective comments on what they learnt from the education and how they have integrated that into their practice. Demonstration of integration of the learning into practice is an essential part of the CPD record. For a series of lectures or seminars, please list the actual dates and topics.

Continuing professional development will be recorded on [Form F](#) and should be signed by the departmental manager.

Figure 1. Flow chart demonstrating process



## Section 8. How to contact us

Please use the email account we have created for the Genetic Nurse and Genetic Counsellor Branch Board: [gngc@ebmg.eu](mailto:gngc@ebmg.eu)

## Section 9. Frequently Asked Questions

- *When can I submit my intention to register?*

You can submit your intention to register **between 15th July and 15th September** in each year by completing the relevant intention to register form at the [online submission platform](#) and uploading copies of your qualifications to the Branch Board. The EBMG will consider your

intention to register application and assess your eligibility to apply. You will be sent a notification by email informing of your eligibility by **15th October**.

- ***How long do I have to be in practice before I can apply?***

You must have been working as a genetic counsellor or genetic nurse for at least two years full time (or equivalent part time) by the date you submit your intention to register.

If you are applying under the **grandfather clause**, the required period of practice must have been completed by the date of intention to register.

Please note that the assessment for eligibility to register will be based on the work carried out by the applicant, rather than the professional title or background. Only those applicants who fulfil the criteria for working as a genetic counsellor or genetic nurse will be accepted.

- ***I am a medical doctor, can I apply?***

A medical practitioner who is employed as a doctor, even if he or she performs genetic counselling, will not be registered as a genetic counsellor. The EBMG has a Branch Board for these professionals as well as another Division for Clinical Laboratory Geneticists.

- ***How can I notify the Branch about my Intention to Register?***

Please submit your initial application form at the [online submission platform](#) and upload copies of your qualifications to the Branch Board.

- ***What happens next?***

If you are eligible, you will then need to submit your full application by **15th January the following year**. For example, if you submit your intention to register by 15th September 2016, you would submit your full application by 15th January 2017. You should therefore have allowed time to complete the full portfolio before you send your intention to register. *Previous applicants have stressed that the portfolio does take some time to complete and you need to allow sufficient time to do this.*

Please note the registration assessment will not be possible until payment has been confirmed. As soon as the notification of fee payment is received, applicants will be able to upload their full-applications into their login area at the online system. **Final date for EBMG to receive full applications is 15th January.**

- ***How do I pay the fee?***

After we make an initial assessment of intentions to register, the ESHG/EBMG office will send to all eligible applicants the details about how to pay the fee, either by debit/credit card or bank transfer.