

Assessment

The Board of Genetic Counselors – India (BGC) is committed to ensure that individuals seeking genetic counseling services in India receive services from professionals with a high level of competency. The process of certification and recertification has been adopted by most professional organizations as a mechanism for assessing and maintaining the knowledge and skills of its practitioners.

Eligible professionals will be required to demonstrate significant involvement in the evaluation and counseling of patients seeking genetic information. They will be evaluated on experience and expertise required of genetic counselors. This is evaluated by the Certification Board through a written and oral exam.

Overview of the certification process

The Board of Genetic Counselors – India offers Certification for Practicing Genetic Counselors who meet minimum eligibility requirements of knowledge, skills, attitudes, process, practice, performance and judgment that a genetic counselor must display in order to competently fulfill their designated role and setting. The Board will ratify best practice standards in the field of genetic counseling in India, towards which it acts as to verify, support, guide, and monitor the quality of services provided by the genetic counseling practitioners.

The Board certifies Genetic Counselors in the following categories & specializations:

The Board certifies Genetic Counselors based on their core competency skills; however they may specialize in the one of following areas:

Pediatric & Neonatal

Cancer;

Cardiology;

Ophthalmic;

Adult/Life style

Reproductive/Prenatal

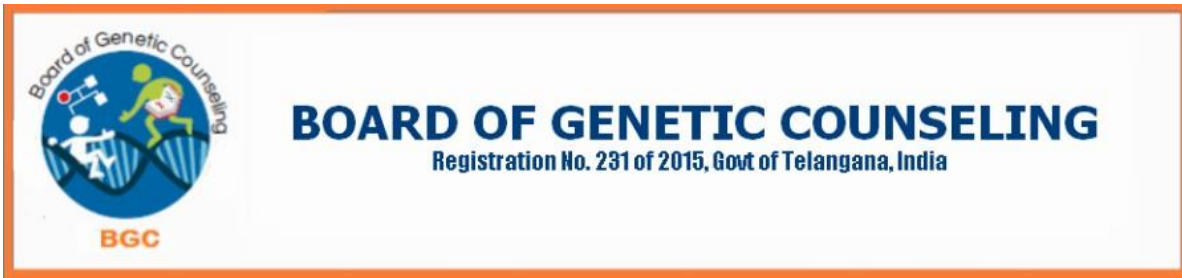
ART/Pre Implantation

Musculo Skeletal/Neurology

Etc

Eligible candidates may apply for one of the following Levels of Certification:

A Level I Certified Genetic Counselor will be deemed competent to handle a supervised genetic service for hereditary risk evaluation, pedigree drawing and assessment, and pre-test genetic



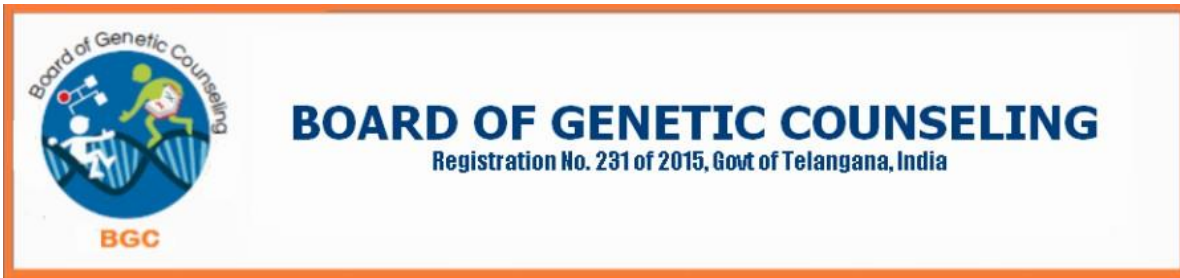
counseling, in a clinical setting. The Level I Certified Genetic Counselor will offer risk evaluation and genetic testing after due consultation with the supervising clinician, including with a Level II Certified Genetic Counselor, and maintain records with signatures of the supervisor to this effect. The Level I Certified Genetic Counselor will provide post-test genetic counseling, management recommendations, predictive, pre-natal and preimplantation genetic counseling and testing, ethical, social, psychological and legal issues arising out of the counseling sessions under supervision.

A Level II Certified Genetic Counselor will be deemed competent to independently handle a full-fledged genetic service, offer hereditary risk evaluation, pedigree drawing and assessment, pre- and post-test genetic counseling, risk management recommendations, predictive, pre-natal and pre-implantation genetic counseling and testing, and counseling for ethical, social, psychological and legal issues arising out of the counseling sessions.

Eligibility Criteria for Application

The following categories of individuals are eligible to applying for certification under BGC.

- i. Individuals who have completed an accredited genetic counseling course from India, or equivalent, from any other country.
- ii. Individuals who have completed a formal training or educational course in genetic counseling of at least one year duration.
- iii. Individuals who have completed a post-graduate educational course in genetics, medicine, psychology, sociology, nursing, life-sciences and allied fields of at least two-year duration, with relevant clinical counseling experience.



iv. Individuals with Masters or PhD degree in genetics/genomics/life sciences currently working or have worked in a genetics or genomics lab providing result related counseling to patients for more than 3 years, with relevant clinical counseling experience.

For Level I Certification - All candidates must show competency in the form of **suitable educational background** along with written and supported evidence of observing at least 50 genetic counseling sessions in a clinical setting. They must have undertaken supervised counseling of 20 clinical cases at a pre-test genetic counseling stage.

For Level II Certification - Candidates could either be Level I Certified Genetic Counselors for 3 years or current Practicing Genetic Counselors with 5+ years of experience post Masters/PhD and supported evidence of participating in at least 100 genetic counseling sessions in a clinical setting. They must have undertaken supervised counseling of 25 clinical cases independently, with at least 10 in a post-test genetic counseling stage.

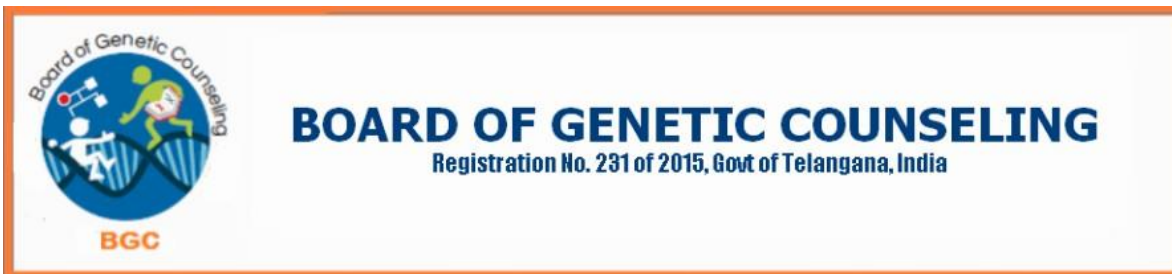
Note : Practicing genetic counselors may directly apply for Level II examinations if they fulfill the criteria and believe they are suitably qualified and experienced.

For Associate members CATEGORY III – Direct Certification

Professionals with more than 10years of experience in genetic teaching/testing associated with university, industry, hospitals/clinics or private research laboratory/institutes can apply for associate certification. The board looks forward to add seasoned senior members, who can support BGC in guiding, planning courses, training, CMEs, workshops etc. Applicants are requested to email a letter of intent in addition to filling the online form available on website. Certification is approved after interview with two EC members

For BGC “Grandfathers’ CATEGORY IV– Direct Certification

Any practising counselor who has conducted genetic counseling sessions professionally and consequently for more than ten years, and has personally handled over 200 counseling sessions covering issues such as hereditary risk evaluation, pedigree drawing and assessment, recommendations for genetic testing, pre- and post-test genetic counseling, risk management recommendations, predictive, pre-natal and pre-implantation genetic counseling and testing,



and counseling for ethical, social, psychological and legal issues arising out of the counseling sessions, may submit an application for consideration of direct certification, for award of Certification under Grand-father category. This is to recognize and record the pioneering work done in Genetic Counseling by those who helped create the field of Genetic Counseling through application of their educational qualifications to become genetic counselors through years of on-the-job professional experience.

These will be approved by the advisory board consisting of clinical, academic and scientific genetic practitioners with relevant expertise, followed by approval of the EC of BGC - I.

Assessment

The applicant will be assessed based on knowledge, skills, attitudes, process, practice, performance and judgment that a genetic counselor must display in order to fulfil their designated role and setting.

Assessment for Level I and II Genetic Counselors will comprise a written examination and an oral interview. Examinations will be held once every year during June- July. Applicants who pass the written exam and interview, as per the Level/Specialization accorded, will be awarded a certification for licence to practice, and a registration number. They will then be deemed to be recognised by this body as Board Certified Genetic Counselors – Level I/II, to practice the genetic counseling profession as per the laid down Code of Ethics and Guidelines.

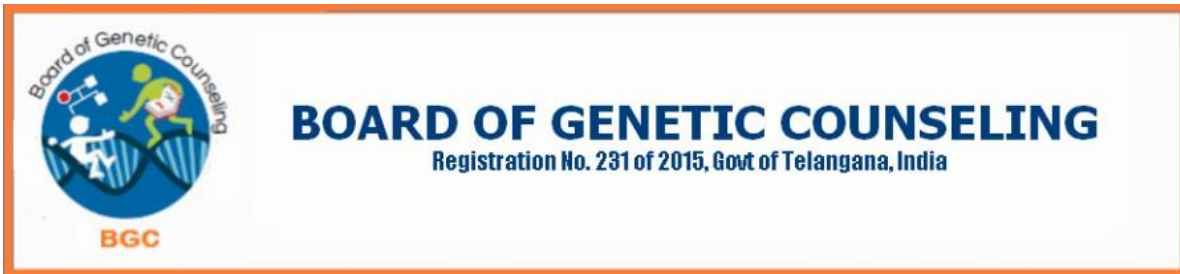
Assessment Criteria for Board Certification

Level 1 – Masters in any stream of Life Sc. + 1 year course/experience in Genetic Counseling Observer on at least 50 GC cases (Letter from supervisor to state the same). Log book (20 cases) + Case study (2) + reflective essays (2) + written and oral exam

Level II- (direct) – Masters/PhD in any stream of Life Sc with 5+ years of counseling experience with at least 100 cases. 20 Log cases + 5 Long case study + 2 reflective essays + written and oral exam

For Level I to upgrade to Level II –

After 3 years of getting Level I– at least 100 cases + 20 Log + 5 long case study + 2 reflective essays- different from the ones they submitted earlier.



Areas of Core Competency for Evaluation: The following core competences will be assessed in the Certification process:

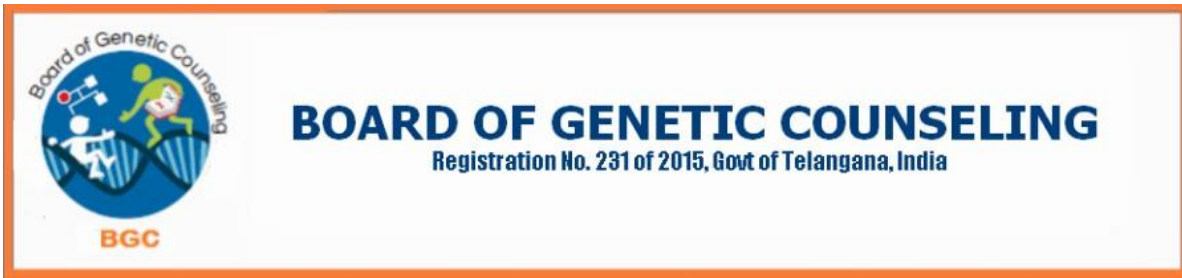
A clinic-based genetic counselor will typically have patient and health team-oriented skills in Knowledge of Genetics; Communication; Critical Thinking; Interpersonal, Counseling and Psychosocial Assessment; and Professional Ethics and Values.

Applicants must be able to show proficiency in Knowledge of Genetics/Genomics

Candidates must have a deep and broad knowledge of modes of inheritance, pedigree drawing and recurrence risk calculations, along with specialised knowledge, required to provide effective genetic counseling services.

Establishing Relationships

Demonstrate clear and professional oral and written communication in interactions with patients and collaborators.



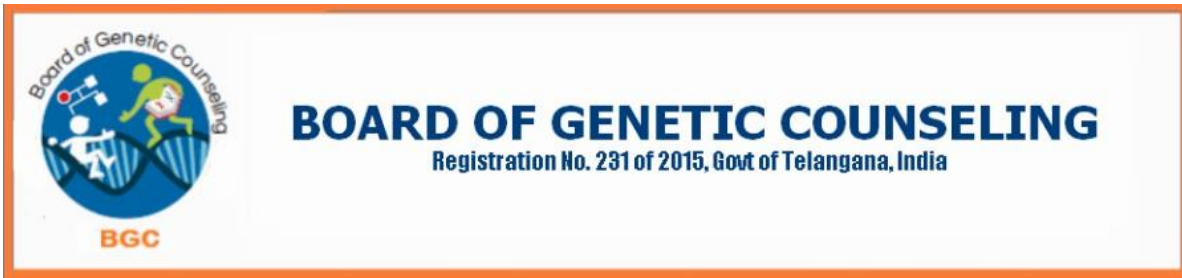
- Establish rapport with patients and identify and address barriers to communication.
- Apply the principles of trust, respect, beneficence, honesty, and empathy to all patient relationships.
- Use patient-centred principles in the communication process that respect and respond to patients' values, preferences, decisions or self-identified best interests.
- Strive to achieve a mutual understanding of expectations and desired outcomes with patients.

Psychosocial Support and Counseling

- Utilize appropriate interviewing techniques to identify patients' expectations and major concerns.
- Determine patients' sources of emotional and psychological support.
- Explore patients' coping skills including decision-making strategies and capacity.
- Use empathetic listening to establish rapport and formulate appropriate questions to encourage patients to engage in discussion.
- Assess patients' understanding and response to medical and genetic information and its implications.
- Respond appropriately to patients' emotional states.
- Recognize when a patients' psychological state may benefit from appropriate Interventions and/or referrals.

Awareness of Diversity

- Recognize, acknowledge and respect differences relevant to patient interactions, including but not limited to cultural, spiritual, physical, cognitive, and political and sexual



orientation.

- Communicate and practise in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Reflect on and address their own biases and cultural differences when interacting with patients.

Communication of Information

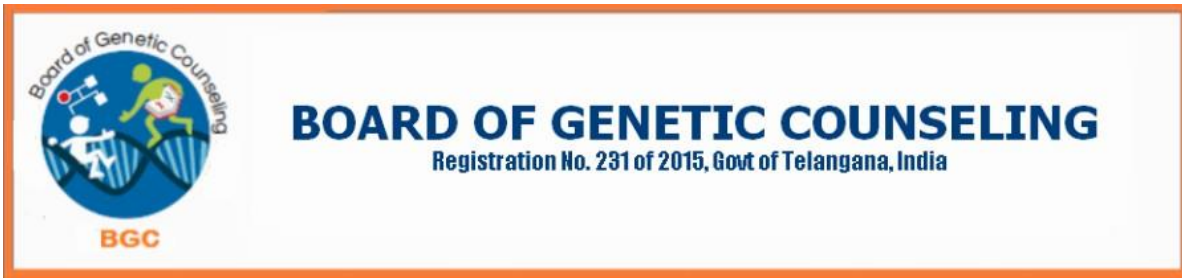
- Elicit family, medical, genetic and other relevant information as appropriate.
- Convey information to patients in a manner that meets their needs and levels of understanding.
- Discuss available options, appropriate genetic tests and/or clinical assessments including the potential benefits, risks and limitations to enable patients to make informed decisions.
- Provide clear information which is tailored to the needs of patients,

Effective Practice Methods

- Understand the development and implementation of standards, practice guidelines, education, and research initiatives related to genetic counselor practice.
- Integrate genetic counseling skills with theoretical and scientific knowledge, as applicable in interactions with patients.
- Provide safe, efficient and effective genetic counseling services.
- Understand and provide clear consent information.

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate and summarize pertinent data from the published literature, databases, and other professional resources.



- Synthesize relevant information as the basis for assessing risk potential, screening and testing options, reproductive options, and follow-up recommendations.
- Assess and calculate the risk of occurrence/recurrence of a genetic condition or congenital anomaly using a variety of techniques (inheritance patterns, epidemiological data, quantitative genetic principles and/or statistical models).

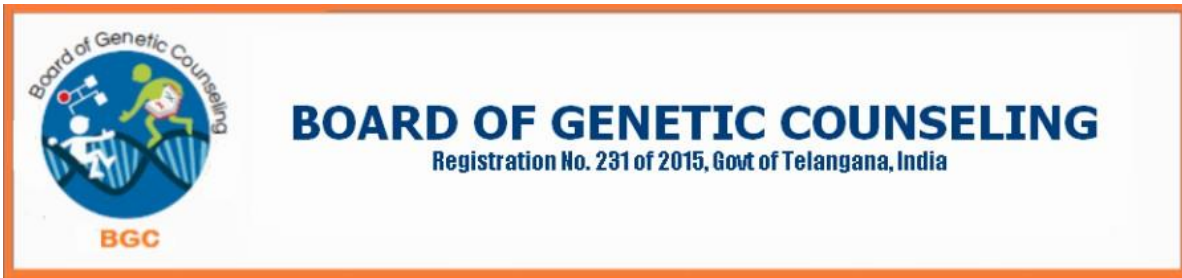
Clinical Case Management

- Analyse and accurately interpret genetic and family data.
- Understand relevant medical details as related to clinical cases and genetic conditions.
- Design, implement and periodically assess genetic counseling case management plans.
- Explain options and facilitate appropriate screening and testing.
- Facilitate decision making of patients that is informed and meets their needs.
- Follow up with patients, laboratories and/or other professionals as necessary.
- Document medical and genetic counseling information appropriately.
- Recognize circumstances in which the input of other members of the healthcare team would contribute to and enhance case management.

Candidates must additionally display skills for:

Professionalism

- Reflect on and evaluate their own practice, recognizing limitations in knowledge and level of competence.
- Engage in life-long learning to gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Keep abreast of new practice standards and evidence-based research advances, as well



as scientific and societal developments.

Ethical Practice

- Be aware of and act in accordance with the ethical and legal principles and values of the profession.
- Be familiar with issues surrounding privacy, informed consent, confidentiality, real or potential discrimination, self-determination and other legal/ethical matters related to the collection, use, disclosure and exchange of genetic information.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality and security in the transmission, storage, management and discussion of professional issues and clinical and research information.
- Recognize their own values and biases in relating to patients.
- Identify and react to ethical dilemmas arising in practice and seek assistance as needed from experts in these areas.

Recertification :

The registration of all BGC - I members will be valid for three years, and will be renewed on submission of proof of appropriating further skills, training and education. The individual will provide evidence of participation in Continuing Professional Education programs, seminars, conferences required for keeping abreast with the field. Being involved in teaching/training/mentoring of junior GCs through courses, workshops, seminars and lectures. Example of Requirements – attendance of 2 Human Genetics/ Genetic Counseling related conferences or three activities which include any of these (abstract/poster presented at national or international conference / student training / publication in peer reviewed scientific journal / organizing CME)