



## Genetic Nurse and Counsellor Professional Branch Board

### Form H. Additional assignment information

#### Science assignments

Applicant must write on two assignments (one essay and one patient letter) to demonstrate his ability to apply scientific concepts to practice.

**Assignment 1.** The essay should be between 900-1100 words. Applicant must put the word count (excluding references) on the first page of the essay.

Applicant should include material on the genetic basis of the condition, tests used to confirm diagnosis, the implications of being a carrier and populations at high risk.

For guidance, the assessment of the science essay is based on the following questions.

1. Is the work well-written in English?
2. Is the condition or concept accurately described?
3. Is the genetic basis of the condition or concept described accurately?
4. Are the potential tests accurately described?
5. Are key statements of fact referenced appropriately?
6. Is the work within the required word count?

Applicant must explain the concepts in his own words, citing relevant scientific texts. He must reference all significant statements with current and appropriate references and provide a reference list at the end of the assignment. Applicant must use the Harvard system of referencing, providing author names and year of publication in the text. The title and reference list are not included in the word count.

**Assignment 2.** Write a letter to the patient described below. Applicant should write as though he has seen the patient and need to summarise the discussion for him. The letter should be between 500-1200 words.

Examples of Scenario. Each year this information is update accordingly to the selected topic.

You have seen a 27 year old woman, named Celine Bianchi, in your clinic. She is married with two children. The first, Adam is 4 years old, very active and healthy. The second is Elise. She is 2 months old and was diagnosed with congenital myotonic dystrophy at birth. She is still requiring hospital care.

Celine has now been diagnosed with myotonic dystrophy. She has problems with her handgrip and some mild muscle weakness. Her father, George, is dead but Celine remembers him also having problems releasing his hand grip.

Celine and her daughter have both had genetic testing to confirm the diagnosis.

**Include:**

- A paragraph stating the reason for the referral,
- Explanation of the genetic cause of myotonic dystrophy,
- Explanation of the inheritance pattern,
- Explanation of the increased severity of the condition in the baby,
- Option for prenatal testing in a future pregnancy,
- Psychosocial issues e.g. associated with adjusting to a new diagnosis in the patient and potential poor prognosis for the baby.

For guidance, the assessment of the letter is based on the following questions.

1. Is the work well-written in English?
2. Is the condition accurately described?
3. Is the genetic basis of the condition described accurately?
4. Is the inheritance pattern clearly explained?
5. Is the prenatal test explained clearly?
6. Have any relevant psychosocial issues been addressed?
7. Is the language clearly understandable by a patient?

Applicant may wish to read the paper on letter writing by Baker et al (2002)

Diane L. Baker, Timothy Eash, Jane L. Schuette, Wendy R. Uhlmann (2002) Guidelines for Writing Letters to Patients *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, 11(5): 399-418.

**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, applicant can avoid plagiarism by using his own words to explain concepts and by adding references to all key statements in the text. For registration level work, we would not expect applicant to use direct quotes, but if he does then the quotation should be in inverted commas and he must reference the source with author(s), year and page number of the quote after it in the text.

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

## **References**

In the case studies and essays, all key statements in the text should be referenced. We suggest applicant use the Harvard system, giving authors' last names and year of publication after the statement in the text, and listing the references alphabetically at the end of the text.

### ***Example of reference***

The new European registration system was based on standards of education and practice (Skirton et al, 2012).

Or

Skirton et al (2012) developed standards of practice and education as a basis for the new European registration system for genetic counsellors.

### **Reference**

Skirton H, Voelckel MA, Patch C. (2010) Using a community of practice to develop standards of practice and education for genetic counsellors in Europe. *Journal of Community Genetics* 1: 169-173.