

The West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC) is an African Centre of Excellence (ACE) of Higher Education in the College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana (UG). WAGMC is focused solely on addressing the developmental health challenge of genetic disorders in Africa through postgraduate training, applied research and service in behavioural, biomedical and clinical genetics. The Centre has exciting new employment opportunities in research, research administration and general administration and it is looking to recruit highly motivated professionals with the passion to contribute to the WAGMC vision of improving access to genetic health for all individuals.

Research Fellow (Biomedical/Clinical) (2 positions)

The Research Fellow position is equivalent to a university lecturer position with a unique focus on research scholarship and grant monitoring and evaluation. The successful candidates will be offered 3-5 year mentored research in biomedical/clinical genetics in a variety of areas including blood disorders, diabetes, kidney disease and cancer with the goal of transitioning to become an independent investigator by the 5th year of Fellowship. The candidates will be assigned a portfolio of PhD and Master's degree Fellowship Awards to monitor and evaluate in collaboration with WAGMC Grants Administration staff, and the host department of the WAGMC Postgraduate Fellowship. Additional duties will include teaching and mentoring of graduates and undergraduates.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conduct mentored research in biomedical/clinical genetics in one of the following thematic areas: a) blood disorders, b) diabetes and kidney disease, and c) cancer
- Develop new research ideas and methodologies; participate in collaborations focused on cutting-edge research; develop research commercialization and consultancy portfolios
- Develop individual innovative research projects and obtain grants to support the work, and contribute to Centre-wide research and research training grants
- Teach and supervise students, contribute to the development, coordination, and implementation of academic programmes in accordance with the aims of the Centre and the policy, strategy, and procedures of the University of Ghana
- Monitor and evaluate the research progress of postgraduate fellows; provide scientific review of research supplies requests; track research progress documenting challenges and devising solutions to overcome the challenges
- Review Postgraduate Fellows progress reports and provide expert recommendations to promote their work and timely completion of projects
- Participate in seminars and thesis committee meetings of Postgraduate Fellows to gain in-depth understanding of their work and research support needs, and work with their supervisors to promote completion of projects and close of Awards

QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

- PhD in Human/Medical/Molecular Genetics or Biomedical/Health Sciences programme with at least 3-years postdoctoral research experience
- Evidence of teaching and mentoring graduate students
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills including fluency in English, effective communication with different groups and report writing

- Good computer literacy skills, with competencies in spreadsheets, word processing, power point, electronic communications applications, including teleconferencing and distance learning platforms

Genetic Counsellor (Part time)

The holder of this post will be responsible for clinical skills training, teaching, research support and supervision of MSc Genetic Counselling students. The job holder will provide autonomous genetic counselling services as part of their role at WAGMC. The Centre is looking for a well-rounded, forward-thinking, culturally-sensitive, and solution-driven individual, well-experienced in genetic counselling practice and highly skilled in clinical supervision, teaching/training, public engagement, and cutting-edge research to join the WAGMC team. The suitable candidate should have the ability to flexibly adapt these skills and experiences to working in a multi-disciplinary team.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clinical Skills Training and Assessment

- Take responsibility for the practical training of students enrolled in the MSc Genetic Counselling Programme
- Act as Course Leader for the Genetic Counselling Practicum and Inter-Semester Clinical Attachment Courses in the MSc Genetic Counselling programme
- Develop course manuals, detailed lesson plans, and a 1,032-hour practicum schedule for active rotation of all students in four clinical areas – haematology/sickle cell, oncology/cancer, child health, and pre-natal/obstetrics
- Teach clinical skills and be responsible for the smooth and competent coordination and oversight of the clinical courses in the Genetic Counselling programme
- Work in collaboration with Heads of the Clinical/Laboratory Units to develop a plan for supervision and support of all students during rotations at each Unit
- Adopt evidence- and competency-based as well as student-centred and integrated learning activities that improve clinical skills learning
- Adopt advanced, practical, and fair methods of assessment that promote active learning, critical thinking, self-reflection, personal growth, and teamwork skills
- Closely monitor students' clinical skills and broader educational needs, appropriately guiding training and learning in ways that ensure eventual development of competencies of world-class standards, as well as to ensure that students are fit for purpose in the local setting

Community Outreach

- Take responsibility for developing students' community engagement skills in genetic counselling as part of the practical training on the Genetic Counselling programme
- Liaise with community leaders and gatekeepers in collaboration with the Programme Coordinators to ensure successful entry into communities
- Create community outreach manuals to effectively guide students to develop, implement, evaluate, write reports, and present reports on peer-led community outreach programmes organised within local communities
- Liaise with WAGMC staff, multidisciplinary teams at UG, and partner institutions to design and implement community outreach programmes for raising awareness about genetic disorders, diagnosing, and providing genetic counselling support including referral support

Teaching and Research

- Supervise research of MSc Genetic Counselling students
- Work closely with research supervisory committees to ensure that students' genetic counselling long essays are fit for purpose
- Ensure consistency of the core competencies taught on the programme by working closely with other Course Leaders in planning and teaching their courses
- Collaborate with the Genetic Counselling Programme Coordinators, UG School of Performing Arts, and partner institutions to secure materials and resources including culturally-relevant role plays and simulations that support active teaching, learning, and assessment of clinical skills and knowledge in real time and also, remotely
- Collaborate with WAGMC faculty to develop research protocols and grant applications and to actively contribute to local and international genetic counselling/genetics research and projects of the Centre

Genetic Counselling Services

- Take responsibility for providing genetic counselling services at WAGMC including accepting referrals (from hospital doctors, community health workers, and support and advocacy groups for genetic disorders) and liaising with the Communications and Marketing Unit of WAGMC to increase awareness of this new service in Ghana
- Elicit clients' (individuals, families, patients) concerns, expectations, and a detailed family, medical, and psychosocial history for assessment of likely patterns of disease risk/inheritance as well as eligibility for genetic testing
- Make referrals for genetic testing (where available), interpret genetic/laboratory /special investigation reports, and expertly communicate confirmed diagnostic and predictive information to clients based on the outcome of genetic testing and/or assessment of clients' history
- Conduct basic psychological wellbeing assessments pre- and post-genetic testing for children, adults, and families and expertly support management of distress including referrals to clinical psychologists
- Provide accurate information and expert counselling that is suited to clients' individual needs about the genetic disorder(s) of concern and results of the assessment conducted, to facilitate informed and autonomous decision making
- Provide genetic counselling with empathy; compassion; sensitivity to clients' background; respect for autonomy, diversity, human dignity, privacy, and confidentiality; and with knowledge of human rights as indicated in the constitution of the country
- Develop and display an awareness of the interaction between clients, counsellors, and other systemic factors associated with genetic counselling across diverse clinical settings
- Provide timely referral to appropriate healthcare professionals, relevant genetics support groups, non-governmental organizations, other local and international sources of support
- Keep accurate records of cases and other clinical documentation in accordance with accepted genetic counselling protocols

Other Duties

- Liaise with the Genetic Counselling Programme Coordinators and Ghana Psychology Counsel to ensure smooth progression of Genetic Counsellor Graduates to Interns
- Offer continuous support to Genetic Counsellor Interns to ensure progressive learning and skills development necessary to become autonomous and top-quality practitioners
- Work closely with the Genetic Counselling Programme Coordinators to evaluate the quality and impact of all aspects of the Genetic Counselling programme

- Provide training for Heads of the Clinical Units and Course Leaders on genetic counselling core competencies and effective supervision in genetic counselling
- Organise workshops/colloquia on genetic counselling for a variety of personnel; e.g., final year undergraduate students, Masters students, Genetic Counsellor interns, faculty in the biomedical and behavioural sciences, the members of the public
- Operate at all times within the Ethical Code of Conduct as laid down by the job holder's national Genetic Counselling regulatory body and within all ethical guidelines indicated by the Ghana Psychology Council
- Work closely with the Programme Coordinators and all colleagues to maintain and improve the quality of genetic counselling education and services provided to our students, faculty, service users, local community members, and the general public
- Take responsibility for reflecting on own teaching, mentoring, and personal strengths and limitations in practice, seek help when necessary, and proactively engage in continuous professional development activities in agreement with line manager
- Be aware of, and follow, accepted protocols and policies of WAGMC and the UG in executing these duties and any other related duties which may be assigned

QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

- Hold a Master's or higher degree in Genetic Counselling
- Be licensed by a recognized body as a Genetic Counsellor
- Have a minimum of three years post qualification practical work experience
- Be resilient and able to work efficiently under pressure
- Flexibly and aptly prioritise job roles to deliver expectations to highest standard

Have experience of (but not limited to):

- Working autonomously within a specialist genetics service. Experience of working with people with sickle cell disease and phlebotomy skills are desirable
- Determining risk factors for hereditary diseases and disorders of acquired somatic mutations
- Discussing testing options and providing genetic testing
- Explaining diagnostic procedures and interpreting laboratory results
- Assessing patients' psychological and sociocultural needs
- Offering education and counselling in specified areas of clinical genetics including haematology/sickle cell; obstetrics, paediatrics, and oncology
- Providing referral recommendations to patients, families, and other clients including healthcare providers
- Coordinating and conducting critical literature searches and analyses to inform practice development
- Planning, teaching, supervising, assessing, and managing clinical skills training of genetic counselling and/or other genetic students
- Simulation and role play development and delivery
- Teaching including teaching clinical skills in a variety settings including low-resource settings
- Organising public engagement programmes on genetic issues/conditions
- Conducting, coordinating, and supervising high-quality research related to genetic counselling and/or genetic conditions

Have excellent communication and interpersonal skills:

- Excellent communication skills including fluency in English and report writing skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening skills with people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds
- Empathic and respectful of others and their unique experiences
- Ability to communicate via formal and informal language interpreters

Have good computer literacy skills:

- Competencies in Spreadsheet, Word Processing, and Power Point
- Competencies in electronic communications applications including teleconferencing and distance learning platforms

Complete cultural adaptation course:

- Candidate must successfully complete the required Cultural Adaptation course with the Ghana Psychology Counsel before they can commence the role

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and CV to careers@wagmc.org by **4th April 2021.**