

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Marking Rubric Essay</b>
<b>Document Code</b>	072_DOC
<b>Version number</b>	V2.0
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<b>Approved by</b>	Chair
<b>Date approved</b>	24/11/25

### Description

Submit an essay, article or other scholarly piece of work on a topic directly related to genetic counselling and/or its operational context. The essay is marked out of 40 and comprises 40% of the total mark.

Demonstrate your ability to critically appraise and synthesise the scientific and professional literature on the topic and evaluate its relevance to practice. The minimum word limit is 3000 words, and the maximum word limit is 5000 words (N.B. in-text references are included in the word count but the reference list is not included. Appendices are not included in the word count, but do not include anything in an appendix that is essential to your essay as this section will not be marked). As a general guide, in a piece of work of 3000 - 5000 words, you would be expected to use 15 - 30 references from literature published within 10 years. If older references are provided the rationale for this should be explained.

If you are the first author on a published paper, this can be submitted in place of the essay. This will be assessed using the same criteria as other essays. There is no word limit for a published paper. The paper must have been ACCEPTED for publication within three years of submission of the Intention to Register Form. The full citation for the paper should be included.

A piece of work written for a course may also be used, but the 3000 to 5000-word limit applies in this instance. The work must have been written within three years of submission of the Intention to Register and must demonstrate its relevance to current practice. If you are submitting an edited research dissertation from your MSc, cut the words carefully. Remember that the assessor will need to have sufficient information about the purpose and aims of the study and how the study was conducted (the methods) to assess the trustworthiness of the study.

## Guidance

Please note: The terms highlighted in **blue** are explained in the Helpful Resources section below.

### Essay proforma

Where the submitted piece of work has NOT been specifically written for Registration, ALL sections of the essay proforma in the Applicant Form PART C (029\_FORM) should be completed to indicate the context of the piece of work i.e. the purpose for which it was first written and the implications for genetic counselling.

**Format:** The essay **must** be formatted as follows:

- Double spaced type in Arial 12pt font with standard size margins (i.e. 2.54 cm).
- The word limit is 3000 to 5000 words. The word count must be clearly documented. Essays that are 10% under or over this limit are acceptable. Essays that are 10-20% over/under the word limit **may be sent for moderation**. Essays that are more than 20% under or over the word limit will **automatically be sent for Moderation**. N.B. Essays sent for moderation may be deferred.
- Figures (including pedigrees) and tables should be referred to in the text and placed in Appendix 1 with clear and accurate legends. N.B. Figures and tables that appear in the main body of the work WILL be included in the word count.
- Appendices will NOT be included in the word count. Appendices other than Appendix 1 will not necessarily be marked.
- Headings should be used to help the reader to navigate the essay.
- These criteria DO NOT apply to published papers.

### Structure and content:

- Give your essay a clear and succinct title.
- Use an **academic writing** style i.e. Write in proper sentences without jargon or colloquialisms (see 033\_DOC General tips for Academic Writing).
- If you are submitting a research study, you should ensure there is sufficient detail about the methods used to fully assess the rigour/validity, reliability and reproducibility of the study. The essay should include Background, Aims, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion.
- Use **APA7 referencing style**. (N.B. In-text references are included in the word count but not the reference list.)
- Any reference to individual patients **must** be anonymised and this should be clear in the essay.



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## Assessment:

The essay will be assessed at master's level (academic level 7) as per the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Level 7 - England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Level 11 - Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)). Please read the instructions carefully and familiarise yourself with the rubric before writing the essay. You will be assessed on the extent to which your essay meets the following criteria detailed in the rubric:

1. Use knowledge of relevant theories and subject literature, demonstrating understanding of the discipline/topic. Show awareness of limits in the knowledge base.
2. Synthesise and critically appraise evidence from a range of sources, including different perspectives, to build a clear and logical argument and conclusions.
3. Apply the findings and/or discussion to genetic counselling practice including reflection and evaluation.
4. Demonstrate professional competence, maintaining professional boundaries, and applying personal, social and ethical principles, including acting and reflecting on feedback and awareness of and demonstration of cultural safety and respect for others.
5. Communicate clearly, succinctly and logically. Keep within the required word count, following academic conventions regarding writing style, structure, referencing (APA 7) and with minimal grammatical or punctuation errors. Where a research study is reported, there is sufficient detail about the methods used to fully assess the trustworthiness of the study (e.g. ethics/ rigour/ validity/ reliability/ reproducibility).

## Essay Rubric

Criteria	Ratings				Total possible points
<b>Knowledge, understanding, academic and information literacy</b>  Uses knowledge of relevant theories and	<b>&gt;8.0 to 10.0 pts</b> <b>Excellent</b>  Excellent application of knowledge	<b>&gt;5.0 to 8.0 pts</b> <b>Good</b>  Good knowledge and understanding with	<b>&gt;2.0 to 5.0 pts</b> <b>Fair</b>  Adequate knowledge and understanding	<b>0 to 2.0 pts</b> <b>Poor</b>  Poor knowledge and understanding	<b>10.0</b>



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subject literature, demonstrating understanding of the discipline/topic. Shows awareness of limits in the knowledge base.	demonstrating sound understanding with awareness of limitations in the knowledge base.	some awareness of limitations in the knowledge base.	with some awareness of limits in the knowledge base.	with little/no awareness of limits in the knowledge base.	
<b>Synthesis, critical appraisal, analysis and evaluation</b>  Synthesises and critically appraises evidence from a range of sources, including different perspectives, to build a clear and logical argument and conclusions.	<b>&gt;8.0 to 10.0 pts Excellent</b>  Excellent synthesis and critical appraisal of evidence from a range of sources. Argument and conclusions are clear and logical.	<b>&gt;5.0 to 8.0 pts Good</b>  Synthesis and/or critical appraisal from three or more sources. Argument and conclusions are mostly clear and logical.	<b>&gt;2.0 to 5.0 pts Fair</b>  Description of evidence from at least two sources with some critical appraisal. Argument and conclusions these could be clearer/more logical.	<b>0 to 2.0 pts Poor</b>  Description of the evidence from limited sources or with limited/no critical appraisal. Argument and conclusions are missing, unclear or not logical	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Intellectual curiosity</b>  Demonstrates application to genetic counselling	<b>&gt;5.5 to 7.0 pts Excellent</b>  Excellent application of the work to genetic counselling practice,	<b>&gt;3.5 to 5.5 pts Good</b>  Application to genetic counselling practice, reflection and	<b>&gt;1.5 to 3.5 pts Fair</b>  Some application to genetic counselling practice. The reflection	<b>0 to 1.5 pts Poor</b>  Limited or no application to genetic	<b>7.0</b>

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practice, including reflection and evaluation.	demonstrating critical and personal reflection and evaluation.	evaluation is mostly well done.	and/or evaluation is descriptive.	counselling practice, reflection and/or evaluation.	
<b>Professional values and behaviours and ethical and social responsibilities</b>	<p><b>&gt;5.5 to 7.0 pts</b> <b>Excellent</b></p> <p>Demonstrates professional competence, maintaining professional boundaries, and applying personal, social and ethical principles, including acting and reflecting upon feedback and awareness of and demonstration of cultural safety and respect for others.</p>	<p><b>&gt;3.5 to 5.5 pts</b> <b>Good</b></p> <p>Demonstrates professional competence and awareness of professional boundaries. Applies personal, social and ethical principles, incorporating and reflecting upon feedback and demonstrating cultural safety and respect for all.</p>	<p><b>&gt;1.5 to 3.5 pts</b> <b>Fair</b></p> <p>Demonstrates professional competence and awareness of professional boundaries. Applies at least two of personal, social or ethical principles, incorporating feedback with some evidence of reflection and some awareness of cultural safety and respect.</p>	<p><b>0 to 1.5 pts</b> <b>Poor</b></p> <p>Professionally safe although limited evidence of working within professional boundaries. Applies either personal or social or ethical principles, incorporating feedback with limited evidence of reflection and limited awareness of cultural safety and respect.</p>	7.0



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				cultural safety and respect.	
<b>Communication and presentation skills</b>	<b>&gt;4.5 to 6.0 pts</b> <b>Excellent</b>  Communicates clearly, succinctly and logically. Keeps to the required format and word limit. Follows academic conventions regarding writing style, structure, referencing and with minimal grammatical or punctuation errors. Where a research study is reported, all elements are reported (Background, Aims, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion) and there is sufficient detail about the methods used to	<b>&gt;3.0 to 4.5 pts</b> <b>Good</b>  Writing is clear and succinct and follows academic convention. The report is well structured with clear transitions between sections. Where relevant, all elements are reported and there is sufficient detail to fully assess the trustworthiness of the study. No (or only minor) spelling and grammatical errors. Uses APA7 referencing correctly. Formatted correctly.	<b>&gt;1.5 to 3.0 pts</b> <b>Fair</b>  Writing is mostly clear and succinct and follows academic convention. The report is well structured with mostly clear transitions between sections. Where relevant, all elements are reported and there is sufficient detail to fully assess the trustworthiness of the study. No (or only minor) spelling and grammatical errors. Uses APA7 referencing correctly. Formatted correctly.	<b>0 to 1.5 pts</b> <b>Poor</b>  Writing is unclear/ wordy or contains jargon/colloquialisms. The report is fairly well structured with some clear transitions between sections. Where relevant, all elements are reported and there is sufficient detail to fully assess the trustworthiness of the study. Multiple spelling and grammatical errors. Errors in referencing. Not formatted correctly. Over/under the word limit by more than 20% (N.B. Essays meeting this	6.0

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fully assess the trustworthiness of the study.	Keeps to the word limit (+/- 10%).	Keeps to the word limit (+/- 10%)	10-20% over/under the word limit (N.B. Essays meeting this criterion may be sent for moderation.)	criterion will automatically be sent for moderation).	
<b>Total</b>					<b>40</b>

## Helpful Resources

- Synthesis: <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/academic-skills/academic-integrity/using-sources/synthesising>
- Critical appraisal: <https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/academic-skills/how-write-critically>  
<https://libguides.bham.ac.uk/c.php?g=654983&p=4603309>
- Theory: <https://dictionary.apa.org/theory>
- Principle: <https://dictionary.apa.org/principle>
- Academic writing: <https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/academic-writing>
- APA referencing style: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>
- Essay writing: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/mar/07/how-to-write-an-essay>
- The way the trustworthiness of a study is assessed depends on the type of study:
  - o Quantitative studies – validity, reliability and reproducibility: [Heale, R., & Twycross, A. \(2015\). Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. \*Evidence-based nursing\*, 18\(3\), 66-67. https://doi-org.surrey.idm.oclc.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129](https://doi-org.surrey.idm.oclc.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129)
  - o Qualitative studies – e.g. rigour, transparency, coherence: [Noble H, Smith J. \(2015\) Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. \*Evidence-Based Nursing\*; 18:34-35.](https://doi-org.surrey.idm.oclc.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129)
- Systematic reviews: [Page M J, McKenzie J E, Bossuyt P M, Boutron I, Hoffmann T C, Mulrow C D et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews BMJ 2021; 372 :n71 doi:10.1136/bmj.n71](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71)

See also 033 DOC General tips for Academic Writing.



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