Position Description

Title: Genetic Counsellor
HEW Level: Level 7

Faculty/Office: Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Position Number:

Department/Team: Department of Clinical Medicine
Date: January 2017

Position Purpose: To provide an individual and/or family members with information and support regarding Motor Neurone Disease (MND) and the associated health concerns which may run in a family to help them better adjust to diagnosis and, where appropriate, facilitate genetic testing or co-ordinate recruitment to join MND research studies.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT
Macquarie University is developing the nation’s first fully integrated academic health sciences centre under a university’s leadership. With a focus on patients and an ultimate goal of improving lives, the Macquarie University Health Sciences Centre will see true convergence of the learning and research endeavours of Macquarie’s Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences with the clinical care provided at Macquarie University Hospital and Clinics. It brings together the excellent work of medical and allied health researchers across the University and around the country, with unparalleled access to the world-leading clinical resources and research facilities found only on our campus.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences has active research programs in biomedical, translational and health services domains, with current areas of strength including neurosciences (especially motor neuron disease, neurological rehabilitation, and the clinical neuroscience of pain), cancer medicine, and vascular science, amongst others. The Faculty hosts the Australian Institute of Health Innovation, an internationally acclaimed powerhouse researching health systems, e-health, and patient safety. In learning and teaching, the Faculty offers a unique suite of capability-based medical educational programs aimed at post-graduation subspecialty medical education and training, and a unique three-year extended masters-level, professional-entry Doctor of Physiotherapy degree.

The Macquarie University MND Research Group is Australia’s largest MND program, comprised of a multidisciplinary team of experts in the fields of genetics, cell biology, biochemistry and animal models, all focused on understanding MND.

ORGANISATION CHART

Executive Dean
Direct report to VC and member of the Executive

Head of Department, Biomedical Sciences

Professor, Neurosciences

Head of Department, Clinical Medicine

Professor, Neurology

Academic Staff
Research Assistant
Research Officer, Biobank

Senior Genetic Counsellor

MND Biobank Coordinator

Genetic Counsellor
### KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Provide genetic counselling and education to MND patients and their family members
- Handle and resolve patient and family members concerns in a highly confidential and sensitive manner to ensure patients are treated with respect and dignity
- Interpret, validate and confirm genetic test results for individual and family
- Gather genetic histories and demographic information, in consultation with clinical staff, where applicable
- Educate patients and families about the natural history of the condition, inheritance pattern, testing, management, prevention, support resources and current research
- Assess and provide appropriate follow up and support to clients or refer as required
- Liaise and provide appropriate information to medical practitioners, specialists, and other health professionals and members of the public with regard to genetic MND disorders and other familial conditions
- Contribute to the development and implementation of clinical protocols and policies related to MND genetic testing
- Coordinate and liaise with research and clinical laboratories regarding genetic testing
- Maintain client records, appropriate statistics and document genetic test results and family pedigrees for use by research staff
- Utilise data to write up case summaries and to assist Academic research staff to create research materials
- Work with the research team to identify patients that could qualify for ongoing trials and research, evaluating and highlighting the associated risk factors
- Perform any other duties as required and as appropriate for the incumbent's level of competence
- Comply with relevant EEO and WHS regulations

### POSITION CONTEXT

| Reports to: | Professor of Neurology |
| Positions Reporting to: | Direct: nil |
| | Indirect: nil |

**Key Direct Clients:**
- Patients
- Patients’ family members
- Academic and Professional staff of the MND Research Team within the Department of Clinical Medicine and Department of Biomedical Sciences

**Other Key Relationships:**
- Macquarie Neurology staff
- Staff of the Department of Clinical Medicine
- Macquarie University Hospital staff
- Pathology and other diagnostic clinics staff
- Department of Biomedical Sciences MND research staff
- Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences higher degree research students

**Budget Accountability:** Nil

**Role-specific Conditions:**
- Drivers Licence may be required
- Current Working with Children’s Check
- Registered or eligible both Part 1 Certification and Part 2 certification by the Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA)

**Scope and autonomy**
Develops and modifies processes, procedures, systems and/or techniques for the work area and/or contributes to the development of University-wide systems, processes and procedures.

**Problem solving**
Analyses, designs and develops a range of alternatives and then uses expertise to decide on or recommend the best course of action.
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<th>COMPETENCIES</th>
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<td><strong>Planning and Execution</strong>: Managing time and resources to complete tasks and achieve objectives.</td>
<td><strong>Perseverance</strong>: Persevering despite obstacles to ensure tasks are completed.</td>
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<td><strong>Quality Focus</strong>: Ensuring accuracy and quality when completing tasks.</td>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong>: Responding effectively to unexpected or changing circumstances.</td>
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<td><strong>Communication</strong>: Effectively articulates key messages, both verbally and in writing, adapting to suit context and audience.</td>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong>: Meeting commitments and responsibilities.</td>
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<td><strong>Service Focus</strong>: Making students, staff, alumni and other key contacts and their needs a priority.</td>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Impact</strong>: Making a positive impression on others in a range of interpersonal contexts.</td>
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<td><strong>Relationship Management</strong>: Establishing effective working relationships with others.</td>
<td><strong>Resilience</strong>: Dealing effectively with and recovering quickly from setbacks or pressure.</td>
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<td><strong>Teamwork</strong>: Working in collaboration with others to achieve shared goals.</td>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong>: Assuming responsibility for making decisions and delivering agreed outcomes.</td>
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<td><strong>Integrity</strong>: Maintaining confidentiality, discretion and professionalism.</td>
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### REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE
Qualifications, technical and/or professional skills and information needed from day one for successful performance.

- Tertiary qualifications or equivalent in health sciences, science, nursing or counselling discipline
- Post-graduate qualifications in genetic counselling and board eligibility with the Human Genetics Society of Australasia
- Understanding of patient confidentiality and relevant privacy legislation
- Computer skills including MS Office and internet and database management

### ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE
Organisational and/or professional skills and information to be developed within the first 3 to 6 months in the role for successful performance.

- Knowledge of the faculty/office’s functions and structure.
- Knowledge of the faculty/office’s policies, systems, processes and procedures.
- Knowledge of how the University works and how relevant functions across the University interrelate.

### KEY EXPERIENCES
Practical experiences and exposure to specific environments or activities related to successful performance.

- Healthcare delivery and demonstrated experience as a genetic counsellor
- Working autonomously within a hospital/research environment with experience in counselling patients and families on the genetic contribution of specific medical conditions
- Building and maintaining relationships with patients, clinicians, medical educators, healthcare providers and industry partners
- Communicating (both oral and written) with a diverse group of stakeholders including patients, medical professionals, research bodies and Faculty staff