

Outcome (Capability) Statements for Cosmetic Surgery Programs of Study

Standards for Assessment
and Accreditation of
Cosmetic Surgery
Programs of Study

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Approval

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Acknowledgement of country



The Australian Medical Council acknowledges Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Māori Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands the AMC works upon.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the ongoing contributions that Indigenous Peoples make to all communities. We acknowledge the government policies and practices that impact on the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples and commit to working together to support healing and positive health outcomes.

The AMC is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori Peoples through its assessment and accreditation processes including equitable access to health services for First Nations Peoples.

Background

The Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Cosmetic Surgery Programs of Study set out the standards for programs of study and providers. AMC accreditation of programs that meet these standards will provide the basis for the Medical Board of Australia to make decisions on approval of qualifications for endorsement in the area of practice of cosmetic surgery.

The outcome (capability) statements set out in this document are part of the standards. They define the high-level and specific knowledge, skills, professional behaviours and attributes that graduates of an accredited program of study in cosmetic surgery are expected to demonstrate and draw on a range of national and international surgical curricula. Specifying capabilities will ensure a program of study enables medical practitioners providing cosmetic surgery to practise competently and safely, and as such will support consumers to seek out medical practitioners who can provide a high-quality service. The purpose is not to restrict those who can practise cosmetic surgery, but to set out an education and training program so that medical practitioners can be endorsed in cosmetic surgery – enabling the public to know who holds an approved qualification.

The Independent Review¹ has defined cosmetic surgery as *'operations that involve cutting beneath the skin to revise or change the appearance of normal bodily features where there is otherwise no clinical or functional need for the procedure.'* (p.4). This project adheres to this definition.

Critically, cosmetic surgery, with its voluntary nature and purpose of creating a more desirable appearance rather than treating a clinical or functional problem² raises a question of whether the concept of 'patient' is fully aligned with the practice of cosmetic surgery or whether the term client or consumer is more appropriate. For the purpose of setting out the capabilities, the term patient is retained.

The terminology of capabilities is consistent with nomenclature used in comparable international frameworks³. These capabilities build on the Medical Board of Australia's expectations of medical practitioners in Good Medical Practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia⁴. Practitioners of cosmetic surgery will also be expected to adhere to other professional standards and guidelines such as the Guidelines for registered medical practitioners who perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures⁵ and the Australian Open Disclosure Framework⁶.

1. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the Medical Board of Australia. *Independent review of the regulation of medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery*, Final report, August 2022.

2. Dean, N. R., Foley, K., & Ward, P. (2018). Defining cosmetic surgery. *Australasian Journal of Plastic Surgery*, 1(1), 37-45.

3. General Medical Council, UK. Generic professional capabilities framework, May 2017. <https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/standards-and-outcomes/generic-professional-capabilities-framework>

4. Medical Board of Australia, *Good medical practice: a code of conduct for doctors in Australia*, October 2020. <http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies/Code-of-conduct.aspx>

5. Medical Board of Australia, *Guidelines for registered medical practitioners who perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures*, 2016.

6. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, *Australian Open Disclosure Framework*, 2013.

Background

The outcome (capability) statements are grouped into four domains as follows:

Domain 1

The cosmetic surgery practitioner

Domain 2

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as ethical professional and leader

Domain 3

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as patient and health advocate

Domain 4

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as a reflective and evidence informed practitioner

The cosmetic surgery practitioner

DOMAIN 1

Domain 1 describes the work expected of medical practitioners providing cosmetic surgery in assessing and caring for patients relating to their ability to perform clinical, non-clinical, and administrative roles and functions to ensure the provision of safe and high-quality care.

On completion of an accredited program, practitioners of cosmetic surgery are able to:

- 1.1 Assess patients for suitability for surgery, including selecting and using appropriate evidence-based tools to screen patients and to explore their intent and motivations, and to screen for psychosocial issues that would warrant referral, actively referring to a psychologist or other mental health professional where there are indications of underlying issues (e.g., depression, anxiety and body dysmorphia), ensuring the outcome of referrals from other health practitioners are known and considered when making decisions regarding cosmetic surgery, and ensuring that cosmetic surgery procedures only proceed where patients have the capacity to make informed decisions about their own care.
- 1.2 Communicate effectively to obtain informed consent (noting specific requirements for patients under 18 years of age), including financial consent, with effective communication of the procedure, including what they can expect, technologies used, risks and benefits to the patient, the likelihood of different or adverse outcomes, less invasive/conservative options, providing the patient with sufficient written information and time (including an appropriate cooling off period of not less than 2 weeks or in line with relevant guidelines), to review information, to decline the patient's request for surgery if deemed not in their best interests and to support patients when they are disappointed with outcomes or have suffered complications.
- 1.3 Demonstrate appropriate surgical skills and techniques to plan and perform safely a range of cosmetic surgery procedures, including sedation and basic and advanced resuscitation.
- 1.4 Demonstrate core knowledge of surgical sciences relevant to cosmetic surgery, specifically relating to:
 - anatomy, pathology, physiology, pharmacology and microbiology relevant to cosmetic surgery, including, but not limited to genetics, wound healing, local and regional anaesthetic agents, and principles of general anaesthesia
 - characteristics of implants, biomaterials and autologous tissue transfer
 - technical characteristics of imaging modalities and devices, diathermy and relevant processes.
- 1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of and technical competence related to equipment and new techniques, technologies and devices including their safety and efficacy, incorporating into their practice where appropriate.
- 1.6 Arrange anaesthetic assessment and make peri and post operative plans in consultation with anaesthetists and deliver high-quality postoperative care including clinical handover, planning for escalation of care including referral to the appropriate facility (such as an emergency department), supporting patients to escalate postoperative care in a timely manner including when to seek emergency assistance, providing appropriate pain management, referring for specialist care when needed, and making discharge and follow up arrangements.
- 1.7 Implement, maintain, and review appropriate risk assessment, management, and mitigation planning including to ensure effective infection control, avoid and manage surgical complications, recognise and respond to acute deterioration and complications, and escalate care when necessary and in a timely manner.
- 1.8 Apply a robust process for determining individual scope of practice, and scope of clinical practice within a particular facility (based on the equipment and support within different facilities) and exercise clinical judgement about practising within this scope with consideration of having kept training up to date.
- 1.9 Ensure the facilities in which they practice are appropriately equipped for the procedures performed including for postoperative monitoring and resuscitation and are accredited to relevant state and/or national safety and quality standards, and understand and fulfil the practitioner's assigned safety and quality roles and responsibilities within these facilities.

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as an ethical professional and leader

DOMAIN 2

Domain 2 describes the work expected of medical practitioners providing cosmetic surgery in communicating effectively, demonstrating leadership and teamwork, and applying appropriate ethical and professional judgement and behaviour.

On completion of an accredited program, practitioners of cosmetic surgery are able to:

- 2.1 Demonstrate self-regulation of their practice, engage in continuing professional development aligned with scope of practice, comprehend the significance and obligations that go with the area of practice endorsement in cosmetic surgery, and contribute to the education and training of others.
- 2.2 Engage in effective interprofessional practice including working and communicating effectively in a team, and ensuring all team members contribute to effective interprofessional practice and that it is clear to patients, the family and colleagues who has ultimate responsibility for coordinating the care of the patient.
- 2.3 Develop and maintain effective clinical governance systems, covering risk management, record management, incident management, complaint handling and open disclosure, clinical performance of practitioners, safe environment, and partnering with consumers, including informed consent, and maintain appropriate indemnification.
- 2.4 Maintain effective records, including appropriate clinical photography and description of the procedure undertaken, in sufficient detail to enable another practitioner or relevant bodies to take over postoperative care and/or operate on the patient in the future with an adequate understanding of what has been carried out, and/or to communicate to a patient's general practitioner or primary medical practitioner and to the patient.
- 2.5 Understand their professional obligation to report poorly performing practitioners and for notifications, openly disclose adverse events/outcomes and conflicts of interest and comply with obligations for reporting to the coroner.
- 2.6 Demonstrate ethical practice to ensure business decisions and personal interests do not compromise patient safety and quality of care by making appropriate disclosure of any financial interests related to patient care including the facilities, devices or any treatment used.

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as a patient and health advocate

DOMAIN 3

Domain 3 describes the work expected of medical practitioners providing cosmetic surgery in engaging in holistic appraisal and effectively navigating the Australian healthcare system and medico-legal standards and processes.

On completion of an accredited program, practitioners of cosmetic surgery are able to:

- 3.1** Make a holistic and evidence-informed appraisal of the patient including physical, mental and cognitive conditions, in communication with their general practitioner or primary medical practitioner and/or with advice from other health practitioners leading to effective assessment and advice on surgery options, including assessing the patient's understanding of the benefits and risks of cosmetic surgery and expectations of outcomes, providing patient centred care at all times, practising in a culturally safe manner, and providing advice on less invasive/conservative options including the option not to proceed with the surgery.
- 3.2** Understand and apply standards of appropriate advertising that adhere to relevant national guidelines/standards relating to advertising of cosmetic procedures such as the role of social media and influencers, legal standards, no use of testimonials, no targeting of vulnerable groups, and contribute to the development of processes to ensure patients can easily identify endorsed practitioners.
- 3.3** Support patients to understand their healthcare rights as described in the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, provide information to patients such as services and technologies available, estimated service costs, refunds or compensation, alternative access to health care after hours or in an emergency, and mechanisms for providing feedback including the contact details for the appropriate healthcare complaints authority, and adhere to the medical and legal obligations of the contractual agreement with the patient.
- 3.4** Demonstrate a commitment to open disclosure by communicating detailed information to patients, before and after cosmetic surgery, that clearly describes in plain language what surgery is offered or has been performed, realistic expectations of outcomes and risks, ongoing care needs and how to access post operative care including when to seek emergency assistance.

The cosmetic surgery practitioner as a reflective and evidence informed practitioner

DOMAIN 4

Domain 4 describes the work expected of medical practitioners providing cosmetic surgery in keeping their knowledge, skills, and capabilities up to date, building these into practice, and engaging in activities that create, maintain, and improve high-quality patient outcomes and care.

DOMAIN 4

On completion of an accredited program, practitioners of cosmetic surgery are able to:

- 4.1 Reflect on their practice and monitor cosmetic surgery outcomes by understanding and participating in audit and service improvement and engaging with feedback from patients.
- 4.2 Demonstrate evidence-based practice, including keeping up to date with the scientific literature, evaluating latest techniques and technologies including the safety and efficacy of devices, having knowledge of the latest technologies available and protocols for assessing the suitability of new interventions, engaging in research that adheres to ethical standards, and making changes to practice accordingly.
- 4.3 Engage in continuing professional development and demonstrate a commitment to maintaining, developing, updating, and enhancing their knowledge, skills and performance so that they are equipped to deliver safe and appropriate care throughout their working lives.