



Australian
Medical Council Limited

Media Release

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New training standards for cosmetic surgery to protect patients

High standards of training for doctors practising cosmetic surgery are expected under a new set of accreditation standards developed by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) for the Medical Board of Australia.

“These standards are about making cosmetic surgery safer for people,” said AMC President Professor Geoff McColl. “They will give patients greater confidence that their doctor has the right skills and knowledge to practice safely, ethically and effectively.”

Under the new standards, education providers will need to have in place a rigorous program that covers scientific and theoretical learning, supervised clinical practice and reflective practice capabilities so that doctors are skilled, safe, and ethical practitioners in cosmetic surgery.

The AMC will assess education programs, and if they meet the standards, will accredit them. The AMC will then monitor training programs to ensure they continue to meet the standards. Accredited cosmetic surgery programs will need to show that quality care is delivered safely, ethically and in the best interests of patients. This must be at the heart of the curriculum.

“Anyone who wants to be a medical practitioner endorsed for cosmetic surgery will need to be properly trained under these standards,” said Amanda Wilson, community member of the AMC and the NSW Board of the Medical Board of Australia. “And this means the clinical side as well as what the public expects from an ethical and honest health advocate for the patient.”

The release of the standards follows an independent review into Australia’s cosmetic industry which found that there were no universal minimum standards of education or training for practitioners.

The review made 16 recommendations including that cosmetic surgery be endorsed as an area of practice – a move supported by all health ministers. This means that practitioners will have to complete an accredited cosmetic surgery program before they can claim to have an approved qualification.

Graduates of accredited programs will then be able to apply to the Medical Board of Australia to have an endorsement on their registration. Critically this information will be published on the [public register](#) allowing people to see who is qualified to practise.

“By establishing what sort of training and education practitioners should have, and then making that information available to the public, people can make a more informed decision about who they choose,” said Professor McColl.

Up until now there has been no approved qualification for cosmetic surgery. Before these changes, essentially any medical practitioner could perform invasive cosmetic procedures without having the necessary skills and experience. “Cosmetic surgery has been like a license to print money because without clear standards, people have had to rely on what their doctor has said about their training and experience,” said Amanda Wilson. “It’s important people get the facts easily and transparently.”

“A lot of people don’t know to look into the qualifications of the professional they’re seeing,” said AMC community member Jordan van Rosmalen. “They just take for granted that because you’re in a medical environment and the person has ‘Doctor’ in front of their name, they must be qualified. Now there is a process for this which says this is the standard required, and that this person has completed a program that meets those standards.”

The accreditation standards are part of a suite of measures designed to make cosmetic surgery safer for consumers. This includes tougher rules for advertising, stronger guidance for doctors who perform cosmetic surgery, new safety measures including referral by a GP, and accreditation of facilities.

“Throughout the whole process we really wanted to emphasise safety,” said Jordan van Rosmalen. “How do we ensure that the people performing cosmetic surgery are safe to do so. Part of the purpose of these standards is to build on other things that are happening in the sector to help keep people safe.”

The Medical Board of Australia has approved the accreditation standards to take effect from 19 April. Organisations who want to apply for accreditation of a cosmetic surgery program, should email the AMC at accreditation@amc.org.au.

You can find more information about the standards on the [AMC website](#).

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