



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

Cammeraygal Country

Level 6, 33 Chandos Street, St Leonards NSW 2065 Australia

Telephone: +61 2 8765 0242 | Australia Only: 1300 361 821

Email: admin@dermcoll.edu.au | Website: www.dermcoll.edu.au

Dermatology Australasia and Australasian College of Dermatologists

Course outline:
General Principles of Dermatology

2026



1. Course information

1.1 Course aims

The skin is the largest organ in the body, and size matters.

There is a tendency for many doctors to underestimate the impact of skin disease. The reason for this is that skin problems are seen as non-life threatening. For the most part this is true, however extensive skin damage does have a mortality. What is also is the impact on a patient's psychological well-being of having a condition that is chronically itchy and unsightly.

More than 10 % of consultations with general practitioners involve dermatological disease. If you go into general practice when you complete your training, you will often be called upon to manage common skin disease and you will need to understand appropriate treatment and referral.

This course aims to instill an understanding of the basic structure and function of the skin, which is essential to understand the pathophysiology of skin disease.

Clinical scenarios are used extensively in the course. These will ensure that participants have a wide range of clinical experience on which to draw upon when managing their own patients.

1.2 Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Recall the basic structure and functions of normal skin
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of basic dermatological terminology
- Execute dermatological history taking
- Describe how to undertake a full skin examination
- Determine therapeutic options in skin disease
- Integrate the learnt principles as a guide for an appropriate referral to a dermatologist

1.3 Learning and teaching activities

The course is organised into six components.

- **Pre-learning activities:** are completed prior to starting the course and include a self-rating of your current skills and knowledge about skin structure and function, as well as conditions associated with the skin.
- **Self-paced online modules:** There are six self-paced online modules. At the end of each module participants will need to complete the Topic Scenarios which consist of case studies with T/F or multiple choice questions.
 - Skin Structure and Function
 - Taking a Dermatological History
 - Conducting a Skin Exam
 - Differentiation by Body Region
 - Lesion Morphology
 - Basic Principles of Treatment
- **Case Discussion Forum:** This is a forum where students list differential diagnosis, treatment and management options on various case studies. Lecturers and other students can provide feedback for discussion. This is an interactive course component.
- **Webinars:** 1 live webinar is held as part of this course in Trimester 1. Attendance or watching the recording are mandatory. Attendance is preferred, as it is an opportunity to interact with your lecturer and colleagues.
- **Final Assessment:** The final assessment for the subject is an online 40-minute examination.
- **Post-course Self Reflection:** completed after starting the course and includes a self-rating of your acquired skills and knowledge about skin structure and function, as well as conditions associated with the skin.

Clinical scenarios are the main teaching and assessment tool across all learning modes of the course. They illustrate the essential content in the online modules. They are used to assess the application of knowledge and skills in the end-of-topic tests and final examination.

2. Course Structure and Outline

You can enroll in this course at any time to access the course material. This course is delivered over a 16 - week period and is self-paced.

Please be advised that the webinars are only run in Trimester 1 of each year and enrolment in this Trimester is thus encouraged.

The course consists of a total of approximately 17 hours of student effort. Here is a general overview of how long items may take:

- 2 hours orientation/planning/pre- and post-reflection exercises
- 9 hours online learning
- 1 hour live webinars
- 2 hours Case Discussion Forum
- 1 hours Final Online Exam
- 2 hours Additional Reading

CPD Hours

	Total Hours	Educational Activities	Performance Review Activities	Outcome Measurement Activities
RACGP CPD Hours	17	12	5	0
ACRRM PDP Hours	17	12	5	0

1.Skin Structure and Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Structure of the skin<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Epidermis○ The Dermis○ The Hypodermis• The functions of the skin<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Terminology: Skin morphology○ Lesion/Morphology Description Table
2.Taking a Dermatological History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking a dermatological history• Useful prototype questions• Taking a history of the patient with an itchy rash• The Dermatology Quality of Life Index• Skin cancer examination• Skin exam video• The Dermatoscope

3. Conducting a Skin Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting a Skin Examination The Dermatoscope
4. Differentiation by Body Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body regions Standard anatomical terminology/descriptors Commonly encountered conditions (region specific)
5. Lesion Morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terminology/descriptors relating to morphology Terminology/descriptors relating to the edge of a rash Terminology/descriptors relating to colour Terminology/descriptors relating to symptoms Terminology/descriptors that are lesion specific Terminology/descriptors (standard anatomical) relating to lesion location Tabulated Lesion/Morphology Description
6. Basic Principles of Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topical therapy Anti-infective therapy Retinoids Immunosuppressive and anti-inflammatory therapy Antihistamines Skin care and Treatment regimes Phototherapy Cryotherapy Skin biopsy Cutaneous surgery Radiotherapy and lasers

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment tasks

Tasks	Task Description	Time	Weighting
Quizzes & Practice Scenarios	Complete the 6 topics and associated activities such as short diagnostic quizzes and practice scenarios.	At the end of the relevant topics	Need to pass to proceed
Webinar	Attend the live or view the recorded webinar.		Compulsory to complete
Case Discussion Forum	Reply to at all the available cases.	Throughout enrolment	20%
Final Online Exam	A mark equivalent to 75% of the total possible mark for the exam must be obtained to be considered to have passed the exam.	After completing the content 40 minutes	80%

3.2 Academic integrity, referencing and plagiarism

Be sure to provide a list of references whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research to inform your own work. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.

Please read the ['ACD Academic Misconduct policy.'](#) This policy is available on the ACD Website.

4. Readings and resources

Reading and Resources for examinable material will be provided within the course content. Some extended readings and resources need to be independently sourced.

5. Administrative matters

Please see our Terms and Conditions [here](#).

For further information or questions about the course, please contact enquiries@dermatologyaustralasia.com.au.

The Australasian College of Dermatologists complies with the requirements of the Federal Privacy Act and the National Privacy Principles. A full copy of the College's privacy policy is available [here](#).

Acknowledgements

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- Dr Victoria Mar
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- Dr Adam Sheridan
- Associate Professor Peter Soyer

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