



THE AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

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# Dermatology Australasia and Australasian College of Dermatologists

**Course outline:**  
Skin Signs of Systemic Disease

2026



**Dermatology**  
**AUSTRALASIA**

# 1. Course information

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## 1.1 Course aims

Although not common, the skin can be a clue to a number of systemic diseases.

Clinical paraneoplastic syndromes refer to skin manifestations which may be associated with internal malignancies, excluding direct malignancy invasion or metastasis. For the GP, these syndromes and manifestations will be rarely seen, but offer an opportunity to detect or diagnose malignancy at an earlier stage than may otherwise occur.

Alternatively, the GP may need to provide reassurance regarding skin changes to those already diagnosed with malignancy.

Many systemic diseases are associated with cutaneous changes. It is important to understand these changes for two reasons:

Firstly, they may be the first sign of the disease and may indicate a need to investigate further for underlying problems.

Secondly, they may be part of a disease process that may indicate that the disease is not well controlled or has progressed.

An awareness of the possible manifestations and associations of pruritus with no rash, Sweets syndrome, eruptive seborrhoeic keratoses, dermatomyositis and other rare but distinctive cutaneous entities which are associated with malignancy is important. If such conditions are suspected or confirmed urgent referral to a dermatologist for confirmation is recommended.

This course will introduce you to the most common and most important cutaneous signs that should alert you to the possibility of an underlying process that requires further investigation and treatment.

## 1.2 Learning Outcomes

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify cutaneous changes that may be associated with the diseases/syndromes covered in the course:
  - Endocrine disease
  - Auto-immune disease
  - Internal disease and malignancy
  - Cardiac, renal and GIT disease
  - Diseases and disorders associated with the hair
  - Inherited syndromes (Genodermatoses)
2. Critically analyse clinical cutaneous observations and/or investigations to diagnose each disease/syndrome covered in this course

3. Plan and develop treatment and management regimens appropriate to diseases/syndromes covered in this course
4. Assess when to refer a patient on to a specialist

### 1.3 Learning and teaching activities

The course is organised into seven components.

- **Pre-learning activities:** are completed prior to starting the course and include a self-rating of your current skills and knowledge about skin signs of systemic disease.
- **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 Signs Associated with Endocrine Disease
  - Skin Signs Associated with Auto-immune Disease
  - Skin Signs Associated with Internal Disease and Malignancy
  - Skin Signs Associated with Cardiac, Renal and GIT Disease
  - Skin Signs Associated with Diseases/Disorders of the Hair
  - Skin Signs Associated with Inherited Syndromes (Genodermatoses)
- **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.
- **2 Case Study Submissions:** In approximately 500 – 600 words students need to submit 2 cases from their practice that are relevant to skin signs of systemic disease. They need to present:
  - Clinical finding of the case
  - Any investigations
  - Description of the management
  - Photos of the clinical case (if possible)
  - Summary of the case – therefore a reflection of the main learning points; how the patient was managed, rationale as to why this particular patient was managed in this way or in retrospect what could you have done differently and any other significant learning points. Please include a reference to a literature review.
- **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 50-minute examination with 23 case-based questions.
- **Post-course Self Reflection:** completed after starting the course and includes a self-rating of your acquired skills and knowledge about skin signs of systemic disease.

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

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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 only run in Trimester 1 of each year and enrolment in this Trimester is thus encouraged.

The course consists of a total of approximately 29 hours of student effort. Here is a general overview of how long items may take:

- 2 hours orientation/planning/pre- and post-reflection exercises
- 17 hours online learning
- 1 hour live webinar with Case Discussion
- 2 hours Case Discussion Forum
- 4 hours Case Study Submission
- 1 hours Final Online Exam
- 2 hours Additional Reading

### CPD Hours

	Total Hours	Educational Activities	Performance Review Activities	Outcome Measurement Activities
RACGP CPD hours	29	20	7	2
ACRRM PDP hours	29	20	7	2

1. Skin Signs Associated with Endocrine Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diabetes</li><li>• Thyroid disease</li><li>• Hyperlipidaemia</li><li>• Cushing's disease</li><li>• Adrenal disease</li><li>• Insulin resistance</li><li>• Acanthosis Nigricans</li></ul>
2. Skin Signs Associated with Auto-immune Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lupus erythematosus</li><li>• Dermatomyositis</li><li>• Scleroderma</li><li>• Vitiligo</li></ul>
3. Skin Signs Associated with Internal Disease and Malignancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquired cutaneous neoplastic syndromes</li><li>• Acanthosis nigricans</li><li>• Neurofibromatosis</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuberous sclerosis</li> <li>• Granuloma annulare</li> <li>• Pruritis</li> <li>• Sweet's syndrome</li> <li>• Pyoderma gangrenosum</li> <li>• Erythroderma</li> </ul>
4. Skin Signs Associated with Cardiac, Renal and GIT Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardiac disease</li> <li>• Renal disease</li> <li>• Gastro-intestinal tract disease</li> </ul>
5. Skin Signs Associated with Diseases/Disorders of the Hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair disorders including:</li> <li>• Telogen effluvium</li> <li>• Anagen effluvium</li> <li>• Hirsutism and hypertrichosis</li> </ul>
6. Skin Signs Associated with Inherited Syndromes (Genodermatoses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cowden's syndrome</li> <li>• Gardner's syndrome</li> <li>• Muir-Torre syndrome</li> </ul>

### 3. Assessment

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#### 3.1 Assessment tasks

Tasks	Task Description	Time	Weighting
<b>Quizzes &amp; Practice Scenarios</b>	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
<b>Webinar</b>	Attend the live or view the recorded webinar		Compulsory to complete
<b>Case Discussion Forum</b>	Reply to at all the available cases	Throughout enrolment	10%
<b>Case Study Submission x 2</b>	500 words on relevant SSD case	No later than 2 weeks before Trimester end	75% pass mark 40% weighting
<b>Final Online Exam</b>	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, 50 minutes	75% pass mark 50% weighting

#### 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.

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## 5. Administrative matters

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

For further information or questions about the course, please contact [enquiries@dermatologyaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@dermatologyaustralia.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 Benjamin Carew
- Dr Daniel Hewitt
- Dr Simon Lee
- Dr Victoria Mar
- Dr Jim Muir
- Dr Adam Sheridan
- Associate Professor Peter Soyer

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