



**Medical Board  
Ahpra**

Medical Board of Australia

## **Registration standard**

Endorsement of registration of registered medical practitioners for the approved area of cosmetic surgery

**Effective from:** 1 July 2023

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## Summary

This registration standard sets out the Medical Board of Australia's (the Board) minimum requirements for:

1. granting endorsement of registration of registered medical practitioners for the approved area of cosmetic surgery
2. granting renewal of endorsement of registration of registered medical practitioners for the approved area of cosmetic surgery.

## Background

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory provides for the endorsement of registration for an area of practice. Under section 15 of the National Law, the Ministerial Council has approved cosmetic surgery as an area of practice for which the registration of a medical practitioner may be endorsed.

Registered medical practitioners can apply for endorsement of registration for cosmetic surgery if they have been awarded a qualification approved by the Board or another qualification that in the Board's opinion is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification. The Board may seek the advice of an external agency when it considers whether a qualification is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification.

Approved programs of study for the purposes of registration and for endorsement of registration are published on the Board's website.

## Does this standard apply to me?

This standard applies to registered medical practitioners who hold:

1. a Board approved qualification, or
2. another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification.

This standard does not apply to registered medical students or medical practitioners who hold limited registration, provisional registration or non-practising registration.

## What must I do?

### When you apply for endorsement of your registration

To meet this registration standard, you must:

1. hold registration as a medical practitioner in Australia
2. provide evidence of having been awarded:
  - a. an approved qualification for endorsement for cosmetic surgery, or
  - b. a qualification that is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification. The onus is on the applicant to provide evidence of equivalency.
3. meet the Board's registration standard for recency of practice, specifically in relation to the practice of cosmetic surgery.

If you have been awarded an approved qualification for cosmetic surgery in the 12 months prior to applying for endorsement of registration, you are deemed to meet the Board's recency of practice registration standard.

4. meet the Board's registration standard for professional indemnity insurance. The standard requires that you are insured or indemnified for every context in which you practise. When you apply for endorsement of your registration, you will be required to confirm that you will only practise cosmetic surgery with appropriate cover for the procedures to be undertaken.

## During the registration and endorsement period

### Recency of practice

You must comply with the Board's registration standard for recency of practice.

In addition to meeting the Board's minimum requirements for recency of practice, you must also satisfy your professional and ethical responsibilities to ensure that you recognise and work within the limits of your competence and maintain adequate knowledge and skills to provide safe and effective care.

### Continuing professional development

You must comply with the Board's registration standard for continuing professional development (CPD).

If you are engaged in any form of practice you are required to participate regularly in CPD that is relevant to your scope of practice to maintain professional currency, and support you to maintain, improve and broaden your knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout your professional life.

This means that if your scope of practice includes cosmetic surgery, your CPD must include activities related to cosmetic surgery, including reviewing your performance and measuring your outcomes, to ensure that you deliver appropriate and safe care.

### Professional indemnity insurance

You must comply with the Board's registration standard for professional indemnity insurance.

That means that you must ensure that you are insured or indemnified for every context in which you practise. You must only practise cosmetic surgery with appropriate cover for the procedures to be undertaken.

### Safety and quality

All cosmetic surgery must be performed in facilities that are accredited by an Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) approved agency to ACSQHC standards as specified by the Board.<sup>1</sup>

### Participation in clinical registries

Where they are available, you must provide complete and accurate data to registry(s) that are relevant to your scope of practice in cosmetic surgery. Relevant registries will be listed by the Board on its website. The registries will be created in accordance with the ACSQHC Framework for Australian clinical quality registries as updated from time to time.

### At renewal of registration

An application for renewal of registration will also be taken to be an application for renewal of the endorsement.

## Are there exemptions to this standard?

There are no exemptions to this standard.

## What happens if I don't meet this standard?

The National Law establishes possible consequences if you don't meet this standard, including that:

1. the Board can impose a condition or conditions on your endorsement or can refuse your application for endorsement or renewal of endorsement if you don't meet a requirement in an approved registration standard for the profession (sections 99, 100, 101, 102 and 103 of the National Law), and
2. registration standards, codes or guidelines may be used in disciplinary proceedings against you as evidence of what constitutes appropriate professional conduct or practice for the health profession (section 41 of the National Law).

## Compliance with requirements

The Board and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency may audit your compliance with the requirements in this standard and the Board's *Guidelines for registered medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery and procedures*.

<sup>1</sup> The current standards specified by the Board are the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

## Authority

This registration standard was approved by the Ministerial Council on 24 February 2023.

Registration standards are developed under section 38 of the National Law.

## Definitions

**Approved qualification** means a program of study accredited by the Australian Medical Council and approved by the Board as providing a qualification for the purposes of endorsement for the approved area of cosmetic surgery. The Board publishes a list of approved programs of study for endorsement of registration for cosmetic surgery at [www.medicalboard.gov.au](http://www.medicalboard.gov.au).

**Cosmetic surgery and procedures** are operations and other procedures that revise or change the appearance, colour, texture, structure or position of normal bodily features with the dominant purpose of achieving what the patient perceives to be a more desirable appearance.<sup>2</sup>

*Cosmetic surgery* involves cutting beneath the skin. Examples include breast augmentation, abdominoplasty, rhinoplasty, blepharoplasty, surgical face lifts, cosmetic genital surgery, and liposuction and fat transfer.

*Non-surgical cosmetic procedures* do not involve cutting beneath the skin but may involve piercing the skin. Examples include cosmetic injectables such as Botulinum toxin and dermal fillers (also known as soft tissue fillers), fat dissolving injections, thread lifts, non-surgical cosmetic varicose vein treatment, CO<sub>2</sub> laser skin resurfacing, cryolipolysis (fat freezing), laser hair removal, dermabrasion, chemical peels, microsclerotherapy and hair transplants.<sup>3</sup> Mole removal for the purposes of appearance is classified as non-surgical even though it may involve cutting beneath the skin.

Surgery or a procedure may be medically justified if it involves the restoration, correction or improvement in the shape and appearance of body structures that are defective or damaged at birth or by injury, disease, growth or development for either functional or psychological reasons.<sup>4</sup> Surgery and procedures that have a medical justification and which may also lead to improvement in appearance are excluded from the definition.

*Reconstructive surgery* differs from *cosmetic surgery* as, while it incorporates aesthetic techniques, it restores form and function as well as normality of appearance. These guidelines apply to plastic surgery when it is performed only for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons. They do not apply to reconstructive surgery.

Gender affirmation surgery is not considered cosmetic surgery.

**National Law** means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory.

## Review

This registration standard will be reviewed from time to time as required. This will generally be at least every five years.

<sup>2</sup> Definition originally adapted from the Medical Council of New Zealand's *Statement on cosmetic procedures* (2011) and the Australian Health Ministers' Conference *Cosmetic Medical and Surgical Procedures – A National Framework* (2011). Definition amended in 2022 following a recommendation of the *Independent review of the regulation of medical practitioners who perform cosmetic surgery* (2022).

<sup>3</sup> Definitions adapted from the Medical Council of New Zealand *Statement on cosmetic procedures* (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Definition from the Medical Council of New South Wales *Cosmetic surgery guidelines* (2008).