



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:

Connective Tissue Disease

2025



Dermatology
AUSTRALASIA

1. Course information

1.1 Course aims

Connective tissue diseases have their roots in abnormalities of the support structures (collagen) of the body and they often involve a vascular component. There are many different types of connective tissue disease including:

- Scleroderma.
- Lupus.
- Dermatomyositis.
- Granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA).
- Churg-Strauss syndrome.
- Microscopic polyangiitis.
- Polymyositis/dermatomyositis.
- Raynaud disease.

Many of the conditions associated with connective tissue abnormalities have similar signs and symptoms and therefore are sometimes difficult to form a definitive diagnosis without extensive investigation.

The most commonly encountered connective tissue disease by you as a GP is probably Rheumatoid Arthritis. From a dermatological perspective, the most commonly encountered ones include the autoimmune disorders such as Lupus, Dermatomyositis and Scleroderma. This module concentrates on these disorders.

1.2 Learning objectives (LOs)

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify and describe cutaneous changes that may be associated with Connective Tissue Disease
2. Critically analyse clinical cutaneous observations and/or investigations to diagnose Connective Tissue Disease
3. Plan and develop treatment and management regimens appropriate to Connective Tissue Disease
4. Assess when to refer a patient on to a specialist dermatologist

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 Connective Tissue Disease.
- **Self-paced online modules:** There are five 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.
 - Cutaneous Lupus Erythematosus
 - Dermatomyositis
 - Scleroderma

Note, that some of the information covered in each of these topics is cross-referenced within several of the topics.

- **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 Connective Tissue 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 3. 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 30-minute examination with 7 case-based questions.
- **Post-course Self Reflection:** completed after starting the course and includes a self-rating of your acquired skills and knowledge about Connective Tissue 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

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 3 of each year and enrolment in this Trimester is thus encouraged.

The course consists of a total of approximately 13 hours of student effort. Here is a general overview of how long items may take:

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

CPD Hours

	Total Hours	Educational Activities	Performance Review Activities	Outcome Measurement Activities
RACGP CPD hours	13	4	7	2
ACRRM PDP hours	13	4	7	2

1. Cutaneous Lupus Erythematosus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic LE • Subacute LE • Acute LE
2. Dermatomyositis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical overview • Practice scenarios
3. Scleroderma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idiopathic Scleroderma • Morphea and • Systemic sclerosis • Induced scleroderma • Scleroderma-like disorders (pseudoscleroderma)

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment tasks

Tasks	Task Description	Time	Weighting
Quizzes & Practice Scenarios	Complete the 3 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	10%
Case Study Submission x 2	500 words on relevant CTD case	No later than 2 weeks before Trimester end	75% pass mark 40% weighting
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, 30 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.

5. Administrative matters

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

For further information or questions about the course, please contact 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

The Connective Tissue Disease course has been developed by fellows of the Australasian College of Dermatologists. We particularly thank the dermatologists who have written and reviewed the course materials and supplied clinical and dermoscopic images, as well as facilitating the case discussion forum and webinars:

- Dr Ben Carew
- Dr Yit Nah Lau
- Dr Amil Jockoo

The course development process has been managed by a GP Skin Cancer Task Force with the following college members:

- Dr Benjamin Carew
- Dr Daniel Hewitt
- Dr Simon Lee
- Dr Victoria Mar
- Dr Jim Muir
- Dr Adam Sheridan
- Associate Professor Peter Soyer

© ACD 2025

The Australasian College of Dermatologists and the author retain Intellectual Property rights and Copyright over all content within this course, except content which is specifically attributed to other sources. No content may be copied, reproduced or transmitted via any media or in any format without the written permission of College and/or the author.