Module Descriptor

Title	Ethics and Principles of Aesthetic Medicine		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	Published
Code	HLTH11009	**SCQF Level**	11
Credit Points	20	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	10
School	**Health and Life Sciences**		
Module Co-ordinator	Barbara McIntosh		

Summary of Module

This core module provides a critical foundation for understanding the ethical, legal, and professional frameworks underpinning aesthetic medicine. It introduces learners to the regulatory structures governing aesthetic practice within the United Kingdom, with particular consideration of the evolving Scottish regulatory landscape, and supports critical comparison with international approaches to regulation, professional accountability, and public protection.

The module situates aesthetic medicine within its wider healthcare, societal, and regulatory context, emphasising ethical principles, governance, and professional responsibility. Learners will examine key concepts including autonomy, consent, professional boundaries, and duty of care, and critically evaluate how these principles are interpreted and applied across different regulatory and cultural settings.

Professional, legal, and regulatory frameworks are explored, including scope of practice, advertising standards, record keeping, and accountability to professional and statutory bodies. Learners will critically examine the ethical and governance implications of aesthetic and medicine as an evolving field, drawing on relevant policy, legislation, and professional guidance from the UK and international contexts.

This foundation module establishes the ethical and professional framework that underpins subsequent modules and supports the development of critical understanding appropriate to postgraduate study.

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus[1] ☐	Hybrid[2] ☐	Online[3] ☒	Work -Based Learning[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London ☐ Paisley	☒ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☒	Term 2	☐	Term 3	☐
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Critically evaluate the ethical, legal, and regulatory frameworks governing aesthetic medicine, including professional accountability, scope of practice, and patient safety within the UK context.
L2	Apply advanced ethical reasoning and professional judgement to complex consultation scenarios, demonstrating informed decision-making in relation to consent, capacity, expectations, psychological considerations, and risk.
L3	Critically analyse professional responsibilities and boundaries within aesthetic practice, including record keeping, advertising, safeguarding, and compliance with regulatory and professional standards.
L4	Reflect critically on personal and professional values, assumptions, and behaviours, demonstrating insight into ethical dilemmas and their impact on patients, practitioners, and the wider public.
L5	

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 11** Learners develop a critical and integrated understanding of the ethical, legal, and regulatory foundations of aesthetic medicine. This includes professional standards, regulatory frameworks, consent, scope of practice, governance requirements, and comparison of UK and international regulatory approaches relevant to professional

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

	accountability and public protection.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 11** Learners apply ethical and regulatory knowledge to complex scenario-based contexts, analysing consent, professional responsibilities, and risk considerations within aesthetic medicine. The module supports the application of ethical and governance frameworks to academic and professional discussion.
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 11** The module develops advanced critical thinking through analysis of ethical dilemmas, regulatory cases, and governance challenges. Learners evaluate evidence, synthesise diverse perspectives, and develop reasoned academic arguments in areas characterised by uncertainty and evolving regulation.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 11** Learners develop advanced academic communication skills through written and online discussion activities. Engagement with digital learning platforms, academic literature, and regulatory documentation supports the development of research literacy and professional digital capability appropriate to postgraduate study.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 11** Learners develop autonomy in academic enquiry and demonstrate responsibility for independent learning and critical reflection. The module promotes awareness of professional accountability, ethical responsibility, and engagement with regulatory and professional frameworks within aesthetic medicine.

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**

Learning and Teaching
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours. These hours comprise a combination of scheduled synchronous teaching, structured directed learning, independent study, and assessment preparation. Scheduled synchronous teaching normally includes a 2-hour weekly online session, providing opportunities for real-time engagement, discussion, and critical exploration of module content with teaching staff and peers. In addition, structured independent learning is supported through recorded lectures, guided learning activities, and asynchronous activities supported via online discussion within the Virtual Learning Environment. These activities form an integral part of the taught component of the module and support engagement with core concepts and academic enquiry. Independent study and assessment preparation enable students to consolidate their learning, engage with academic literature, and develop critical analysis and reflective skills appropriate to master's level study. The learning and teaching approach adopts a student-centred model, designed to support the development of critical thinking, academic enquiry, and reflective capacity, and to promote skills consistent with lifelong learning and professional development.

The University is committed to supporting all students to engage fully with their studies. Reasonable adjustments will be made, where appropriate, for students who have disclosed a disability or additional support needs, in accordance with University policy.

Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Tutorial / Synchronous Support Activity	20
Personal Development Plan	12
Asynchronous Class Activity	16
Independent Study	152
n/a	
n/a	
TOTAL	200

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Core

Department of Health C Social Care (2023). The licensing of non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England. GOV.UK. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/licensing-of-non-surgical-cosmetic-procedures/the-licensing-of-non-surgical-cosmetic-procedures-in-england

The Scottish Government (2024). Regulation and licensing of non-surgical cosmetic procedures. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/news/regulation-and-licensing-of-non-surgical-cosmetic-procedures/

Recommended

Donnell, C.C., Woolley, J.J. and Worthington, S.W. (2021). Advertising and facial aesthetics in primary care: how compliant are practice websites and social media with published guidance? British Dental Journal, 230(8), pp. 523–530. doi: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41415-021-2718-4

Maroon, J., Hossain, S.Z. and Mackenzie, L. (2024). A systemic review of the informed consent process for aesthetic cosmetic surgery procedures. American Journal of Cosmetic Surgery, 41(4). doi: https://doi.org/10.1177/07488068241260771

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2025). NMC to update position on remote prescribing of non-surgical cosmetic medicines. Available at: https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/news- and-updates/nmc-to-update-position-on-remote-prescribing-of-non-surgical-cosmetic-medicines/

Prato, E.B., Cartier, H. and Margara, A. (2024). The ethical foundations of patient- centred care in aesthetic medicine. Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine, 19(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-024-00151-1

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements
In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are attending and participating in all timetabled programme activities including on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, placement, work-based elements, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time. **For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:** The university is committed to providing a supportive learning environment that actively facilitates student success. In this programme, there is a high degree of student-led flexibility. You are academically engaged if you are regularly engaged with online learning activities in your own time, course-related learning resources, engaging with scheduled live sessions online, and with timely completion and submission of assessments along with contact with module coordinators and programme lead. Whilst we understand that there may be times when conflicting priorities make participation challenging, for you to gain the most from this module it is recommended that you participate and complete your self-directed learning activities in a timely manner. It may be difficult to pass the assessment associated with this module if you are not regularly engaging with the module work. We may reach out to check how things are going and offer support if we observe that you have not been attending sessions or completing online activities.

Equality and Diversity
The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code. In line with current legislation, including the Equality Act (2010), and the University of the West of Scotland Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code, this module is designed to be accessible and inclusive. Reasonable adjustments will be made, where appropriate, to support individual student needs. Module materials comply with University guidance on inclusive learning and teaching, and assistive technologies, support provision, and adjustments to assessment will be implemented in accordance with UWS policy and regulations. Teaching and learning approaches are designed to support inclusive participation and engagement within a fully online learning environment. Anticipatory adjustments and appropriate flexibility will be implemented, where required, to ensure accessibility and equitable participation. Students are encouraged to disclose any disability, or additional support needs to enable appropriate support to be provided by the Programme Team and relevant University services. The UWS Equality and Diversity Policy informs the design and delivery of this module and supports the creation of a respectful, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students.
(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Biological Sciences Health**
Overall Assessment Results	☐ **Pass / Fail** ☒ **Graded**

Module Eligible for Compensation	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No** **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	Health
Moderator	Gillian Hodge
External Examiner	M Duncan
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**
Changes / Version Number	1

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1
Case Study (2500 words) Students will complete a critical case study analysis based on a provided or hypothetical scenario relevant to aesthetic medicine. The assessment requires critical evaluation of ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations, including consent, governance, and scope of practice. Students will draw on relevant legislation, and research literature to support academic analysis and discussion. The assessment emphasises critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and understanding of governance frameworks within UK and international contexts.
Assessment 2
Online Class Test Students will complete an online class test designed to assess knowledge and understanding of ethical principles, regulatory frameworks, and professional responsibilities relevant to aesthetic medicine. The test will include structured questions requiring interpretation of ethical concepts, regulatory requirements, and professional guidance.
Assessment 3
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Case study	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	60	0

Component 2

Assessment Type	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5	Weighting of Assessment Element (%)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Class test (written)	☒	☒	☐	☒	☐	40	0

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	0 hours

Change Control

What	When	Who