

The Changing Face of Beauty

Therapists looking to provide the latest aesthetic treatments must not be complacent when it comes to continuing education and qualifications, writes Emma Ryall.

There are many good beauty colleges in Ireland and attaining your CIDESCO and CIBTAC/ITEC beauty specialist diplomas represents a foundation education that will serve you well. However, the beauty industry today is at a curvature, with a defined split between traditional beauty salon treatments and medical device-led aesthetic therapies becoming more pronounced.

In Australia, there is a new four-year degree programme, and graduates are called Dermal Clinicians with their own regulatory body. In the UK, the JCCP (Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners), in partnership with the CSPA (Cosmetic Standards Practice Authority), has just launched. That is all driven by a long overdue need for better training resulting in safer outcomes for the general public – all in all, a good thing. The JCCP is also a register where the general public can search for accredited practitioners. While it is currently only open to the UK, there is a discussion about it being extended to Ireland and beyond soon.

While many of the changes may not originate in Ireland, they have far-reaching implications. The majority of the awarding bodies originate in the UK. Due to this, the courses are changing to reflect the



change in standards headed by the JCCP and CSPA. Another outcome is new training from Level 4 through to Level 7. As a therapist, there is more opportunity than ever to open yourself up to new skills. Also, therapists need to be mindful that they need to compete with nurses & doctors in the aesthetics sector. Nurses are entering the beauty sector in large numbers. Achieving formal qualifications is critical to future proof your skills while elevating your desirability as an employee.

Therapists might be thinking to themselves 'but I already have training and have provided advanced therapies for some time'. It is an entirely valid question to ask; however, we return to why the changes in training happened in the first place. While many companies provide a quality training model, courses are often inconsistent, while the curriculum cannot be compared to that of a regulated formal qualification. If training in the sector matched the high level of skill and knowledge required to

operate safely, there would not be the heightened level of claims for malpractice, which caused the change in training to come about.

Evolution of the beauty industry is inevitable. Nursing was not always a university-led career, but today the majority of nurses go through a three- or four-year degree programme. If we look to Australia again with the four-year dermal science degree, maybe we are looking at the future of beauty right there. Insurance companies are already looking for Level 4 qualifications in laser hair removal, and we can predict, with some confidence, they will shortly be asking for Level 4 qualifications for micro-needling, skin rejuvenation, facial peels and many other services you offer every day.

Regardless of your role in the beauty sector, be that a clinic owner, a therapist or even an educator, it is inevitable that sooner or later the changing face of standards is going to impact you. As these changes filter through the industry, clinics will start advertising the fact they employ level 4 and above therapists. In turn, the pressure will grow through the sector as consumers start looking for and asking clinics about the level of training. We will see more registers, quite possibly very soon in Ireland too, highlighting the safety in treatment aspect of using their services to find compliant operators. Our main word of warning is not to be complacent. Early adopters will have the edge over the competition and therapists will have the advantage over other job seekers.

The question is becoming not what beauty college should I select, but who can provide the advanced training required to take full advantage of the changing aesthetics space?

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