

Thinking About Career Options?

Skin Care Therapies/Esthetics



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The information in this booklet
is provided for public interest by
ASSOCIATED SKIN CARE PROFESSIONALS
PO Box 1869, Evergreen, CO 80437
Telephone: 800-789-0411 • Fax: 800-790-0299
E-mail: getconnected@ascpskincare.com
Website: www.ascpskincare.com



So you're considering a career in esthetics?

The career outlook for estheticians has never been brighter. The skin care industry is experiencing tremendous growth, as evidenced by the skyrocketing numbers of day spas and sales of skin care products—both multimillion dollar industries.

The large baby boom cohort has reshaped consumer demand patterns at each stage of its progress. And as boomers are passing age fifty, they are seeking antiaging products and techniques to help them look and feel younger and healthier. In addition, younger consumers are becoming educated about the need for early antiaging intervention and are seeking professional care to maintain healthy skin. Even teens are engaging in skin care treatments to address the issues (such as acne) associated with adolescent skin. These trends put skilled, educated skin care professionals in high demand.

A career in esthetics no longer means attending beauty school. Instead, it means being part of a sophisticated and respected profession. Qualified estheticians can count on a solid income complemented by the satisfaction of practicing in a profession that empowers their clients to feel more confident and secure.

Specialization opportunities within the profession offer countless career options for qualified individuals. Imagine working in a spa, salon, medical spa, doctor's office, wellness center, destination resort, or on a cruise ship, or possibly opening your own business. Advanced careers may include becoming a product manufacturer sales representative, school education director, cosmetic buyer for retail sales stores, or motion picture makeup artist, to name just a few. Wherever you decide to work, becoming a professional esthetician offers you many opportunities.

Definition of skin care/esthetic therapies

Esthetics shall be defined as the application of various techniques to the epidermal layer of the human body. Application of esthetic techniques may include, but is not limited to, facial steaming, exfoliation, waxing, pore cleansing, extraction, and chemical peels. This may also include instructing the client in maintenance skin care and how to apply makeup skillfully to conceal scars and imperfections. The use of creams, lotions, wraps, clay or gel masks, etc., may also be included, as

well as use of the electric pulverizer, spray machine or atomizer, brushing machine, galvanic current, microdermabrasion, and other device driven noninvasive cosmetic procedures.

Esthetic practice specifically excludes diagnosis, prescription, or any other service, procedure, or therapy that requires a license to practice dermatology or any other profession or branch of medicine.

Benefits of skin care

Skin is the largest human organ and covers the entire body. What could be more important than taking care of it? In order to shield the body correctly, skin requires regular cleansing and care. Using products unwisely, sun damage, and unhealthy lifestyles can make one appear much older than one might be.

Trends in the profession

The skin care profession is experiencing an explosion of growth. This is a result of wider public recognition, aging baby boomers, and career change trends.

A significant transformation in the demographics of American therapists has emerged in the past few years, due primarily to the financial viability of a career in skin care. In the past, individuals who chose skin care as a career were often considered to be choosing a frivolous occupation in the field of cosmetology. These days the field has a more professional image. Though many young people continue to enter the profession right out of high school or college, mothers returning to the workforce, medical professionals, massage therapists, and educated individuals choosing a different midlife career path now form a majority of students at skin care training schools.

A clear majority of practitioners provide personal care services in a spa, salon, or private practice setting. Others exclusively

provide healthcare-oriented services, generally working in clinical settings in conjunction with medical doctors, dermatologists, plastic surgeons, or other providers. Many skin care services are not covered under most healthcare plans; however, a growing number of progressive health maintenance organizations understand the services of a skin care therapist in a medical setting can be economical.

The public's interest in preventive healthcare and stress reduction has also resulted in an immense expansion of the spa industry. In addition to luxury destination spas, the spa industry includes resort spas, amenity spas, and an increasing number of day spas and medical spas. Spas typically offer an array of skin and bodywork treatments, often coupled with nutritional and exercise advice.

In summary, the profession is growing, prospering, and gaining well-deserved respect.



Employment opportunities

The skin care profession offers diverse choices about practice setting and extent of hours devoted to building clientele.

Many therapists work in salons and spas, and on cruise ships. Others find work with product manufacturers as marketing/sales representatives or education specialists. Some skin care professionals seek employment as the representative for a particular product line in department stores.

Skin care therapists recognize and refer out certain skin conditions and, thus, make a natural partner to the dermatologist, plastic surgeon, or wellness center. Certain medical careers require more extensive education (such as an understanding of surgical procedures, laser procedures, and pre- and postoperative care routines) than the core education you receive to procure your license.

Skin care therapists may provide cosmetic assistance in a variety of settings other than private practice. To many, the most glamorous career involves freelancing for the film, television, music, theater, advertising, and fashion industries. Other careers involve assisting medical professionals with the camouflage of scarring or birthmarks.

Many estheticians are employed at spas, salons, wellness centers, or medical offices, while others choose to run their own private practice out of a home studio, rented office space, or rented booth space within a facility. In both cases—working for someone and having your own business—there are advantages and disadvantages. Throughout your education, discuss the possibilities with your instructors so you can better determine upon graduation the individual career path you want to pursue.

One important note: today's esthetician must be prepared to be a lifelong learner. Advances in skin care ingredients, procedures, technologies, and therapies are being introduced every day, contributing to a dynamic and exciting industry. Let this inspire you to seek continuing education throughout your career to further enhance your skills and marketability for a more successful career.

How much can you earn performing skin care? Hourly rates depend on setting, region of the country, and the experience of the therapist. Annual incomes vary just as much—many new practitioners earn less, while veterans in private practice may net \$40,000 or more. It depends on your goals, skills, and initiative.



Choosing the training program that's right for you

Choosing a school is a substantial undertaking. Schools come in many sizes and hues, offer programs from 250 to more than 1,200 hours in length, and deliver these programs at varying quality levels. Most are privately owned, though a growing number of community colleges are adding skin care programs. Following are some suggestions to assist you in selecting a program of instruction in skin care therapies.

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

The first step in selecting a training program is to ascertain the reason you are seeking training. Determining your purpose will assist you in evaluating the cost, value, length, and content of the specific courses you are considering.

Do you want to learn skin care to work with medical professionals? If so, you will require more extensive clinical education than is currently required for state licensure. The majority of states that now license skin care professionals/esthetics require completion of at least six-hundred hours of training at an approved school.

WHERE ARE THE SCHOOLS?

To locate a school in your area, check local listings, or visit our website, www.ascpskinicare.com, which hosts a comprehensive directory of esthetic schools across the nation. The direct link to school listings is www.ascpskinicare.com/become/schools.php.

School curricula and objectives vary, partly a reflection of different owner missions and partly a response to an incredibly diverse kaleidoscope of standards for skin care professionals. Some schools offer quick core programs in skin care. At the other extreme, some institutions take only graduate students and offer advanced academic degrees or continuing education. Many are in the middle, offering four- to six-hundred-hour

programs, which include core training and lots of focus on skin care theory and practice; introductory exposure to an array of procedures and treatments; and some work on business, ethical, and professional aspects of being in practice.

After completing your general information search, it's time to select a list of candidate schools and interact with them. Selecting a skin care school involves a number of factors. Geographic location, cost, and program time requirements provide practical parameters. Obviously, the vision and philosophy of the school is a critical consideration.

Call each school of interest to you and request they send a catalog and any other promotional materials. Review the materials from each school closely, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of each. Is the school recognized by the state in which it operates? Is the tuition clearly outlined? Are any additional expenses required? Are the instructors and their respective credentials listed? Has the school received accreditation from an accrediting body? Is the program offered during days and times convenient to your schedule?

Make yourself familiar with the legislative requirements in your state. State requirements are listed on our website, www.ascpskinicare.com (direct link: www.ascpskinicare.com/become/boardinfo.php).

Once you have narrowed down the list of schools you are interested in attending, visit the school. Schedule an appointment to view the facility and be sure to ask any questions you might have. Ideally, schedule your appointment while classes are in session.



HERE ARE SOME SCHOOL VISIT TIPS:

- Ask if you may speak with current students about the school.
- Observe student, instructor, and staff body language.
- Ask multiple people to articulate the school's philosophy and goals ... Does the description sound genuine? Are their descriptions roughly similar? Do the school's purposes match up with your objectives?
- Ask to come back and spend four to five hours at the school sitting in on classes and hanging around the lunchroom or break areas. Use the time to talk to instructors and students, to gain a feel for whether the instructors seem interested in responding to student questions, and to sense whether everyone is enthusiastic about the learning process. Does the school's climate feel comfortable?
- Ask for names and telephone numbers of several graduates of the school, some in their initial eighteen months of practice and others who are already veterans. Call them and ask how well the school prepared them both in terms of skin care knowledge and in being ready to tackle the challenges of building and sustaining a career. You can even invest a few dollars to experience skin care treatments utilized by a particular school's graduates.

Skin care/esthetic schools are very different from each other. You want to make sure the school you attend meets your personal expectations and values. Training in skin care is conducted in both casual and formal atmospheres. The physical facility, instructor qualifications, and teaching philosophies can vary tremendously from one school to another. The importance of these aspects of a school is a matter of personal opinion and should be weighed against your intended goal.

PHYSICAL FACILITY

Schools vary in size and atmosphere. The importance of a personal visit cannot be stressed enough.

Find the school that fits your personal needs and expectations. Are you looking for an institutional setting, a casual setting, or something in the middle?

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

You will want to find out about the qualifications and experience of the instructors. The majority of time you will find this information included in the school's catalog. Your personal goals will influence the level of importance you place on the qualifications of the instructors.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Teaching philosophies can range from apathetic to esoteric to clinical/paramedical. Finding out about a school's teaching philosophies and its instructors is an important step in choosing the training program appropriate for you. Since personal study styles vary with the individual, it is also important to determine if the programs are formally structured or self-directed. Some schools require students to conduct all of their hands-on practice sessions at the school, oftentimes in a student clinic, while other institutions expect the student to complete their required practice hours off site. Some schools offer night and weekend classes, while others only offer day classes; scheduling may be a critical factor in your selection process.

TECHNIQUES

Many schools offer training in various techniques, with courses ranging from beginning to advanced levels of instruction, as well as continuing education. Seminars on specific techniques, business practices, and other relevant subjects often conducted at schools are taught independently at other facilities.



What is accreditation?

The term *accredit* is defined as *endorsement or official approval*. The accreditation process is a voluntary step an institution may take to receive this additional endorsement from an independent accrediting body.

The primary motivation for schools to seek accredited status is to assure prospective students their programs, if accredited, have

met quality and competency standards. The schools must go through an extensive review, self-study, and evaluation process.

The agencies listed on this page accredit skin care/esthetic therapy programs. You may want to contact each to obtain a listing of the schools or programs in your region that have been granted accreditation.

National and regional accrediting agencies

ACCET

Accrediting Council for
Continuing Education & Training
1722 N Street NW
Washington DC 20036
Tel: 202-955-1113; Fax: 202-955-1118
Website: www.accet.org

ACCSCCT

Accrediting Commission for Career
Schools and Colleges of Technology
2101 Wilson Boulevard, #302
Arlington, VA 22201
Tel: 703-247-4212; Fax: 703-247-4533
Website: www.accsct.org

COE

Council on Occupational Education
41 Perimeter Center East, NE, #640
Atlanta, GA 30346
Tel: 800-917-2081 or 770-396-3898
Fax: 770-396-3790
Website: www.council.org

DETC

Distance Education and Training Council
1601 18th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
Tel: 202-234-5100
Fax: 202-332-1386
Website: www.detc.org

NACCAS

National Accrediting Commission
of Cosmetology Arts & Sciences
4401 Ford Ave., #1300
Arlington, VA 22302
Tel: 703-527-7600
Fax: 703-527-8811
Website: www.naccas.org



Resources for financial aid

Below is a small sampling of the resources available for scholarship and financial aid information. Also check directly with your school regarding financial aid.

ACE

Access to Cosmetology Education

www.cosmetology.org or 800-831-1086

ACE grants are designed to help you begin your career in cosmetology. Sponsored by three major beauty industry associations: the American Association of Cosmetology Schools, the Cosmetology Advancement Foundation, and the Beauty and Barber Supply Institute.

E Student Loan

www.studentloan.com

This service compares a range of alternative loans (nonfederal loans) through a search engine that matches the student's needs with a short list of available appropriate loans.

FastWeb

www.fastweb.com

A scholarship search service to help students choose a school, pay tuition, and find jobs and internships.

FinAid

www.finaid.com

The SmartStudent guide to financial aid.

NCEA

National Coalition of Estheticians, Manufacturers/
Distributors & Associations

www.ncea.tv or 201-670-4100

Sallie Mae

www.salliemae.com or 888-2-SALLIE (272-5543)

The nation's largest source of funding and servicing for higher education loans.

StudentCredit.com

www.studentcredit.com or 800-649-8802

Information regarding credit cards and achieving good credit management skills.

TERI

The Education Resource Institute

www.teri.org or 800-255-TERI (8374)

TERI provides education financing and information services to students and their families.

United States Department of Education

www.ed.gov or 800-872-5327

The Department of Education makes available billions of dollars annually in financial aid to enable millions of students to attend postsecondary schools.



Why join a professional association?

WHY JOIN A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION?

So what's next after you choose a school? As a student in skin care, it is important you get yourself started on the right foot by establishing a professional affiliation with an association that best meets your service expectations and shares your philosophy regarding the profession itself. Different associations offer different benefits, and you should gather information on the options available in order to make the best decision for you. Associated Skin Care Professionals (ASCP) is a professional membership organization devoted solely to the needs and interests of estheticians. With more than eight thousand members, we are the largest skin care association of our kind in the country.

WHEN YOU'RE CONNECTED, YOU'RE PROTECTED

When you "connect" with ASCP as a member, not only do you receive the most comprehensive liability insurance coverage in the profession, you also become part of an organization that gives you responsive, personal service and a wide array of benefits to help you succeed in your newly chosen profession of skin care.

If you join ASCP as a skin care student member, you receive liability insurance all through school for your hands-on training, *Fines Lines*—a bimonthly newsletter created just for students to help you begin planning your new career, and online tools to help you design a marketing strategy for your practice while you're still in school. And, the best part is that student membership is only \$59! When you receive your state license for esthetics, you can upgrade to the Skin Care Professional level, and we'll give you the entire \$59 credit toward your first year of membership.

Once you upgrade your membership, you receive the highest professional liability insurance limits available in the field, *Skin Deep*—a bimonthly member publication to keep you up to speed on new techniques and products, the *Successful Business Handbook* (an A to Z guide on succeeding in your profession, complete with camera-ready forms, brochures, business cards, logos, etc.), online marketing support with brochure and business card templates, graphic art, a website to promote your practice, and a client newsletter template—all included in your membership fee.



To “get connected” with ASCP, for more information, or for a brochure, simply call 800-789-0411, fax 800-790-0299, or visit us online at www.ascpskincare.com.





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