

Online training curriculum 2023–2026

End of Life Law for Clinicians (ELLC) is a free training program for medical practitioners, nurses, allied and other health professionals, and health professional students about the law relating to end of life decision-making. It aims to improve clinicians' knowledge and awareness of the law at end of life, and support their delivery of quality end of life and palliative care.

This is an RACGP-approved CPD activity under the RACGP CPD Program (total of 11 CPD hours). ELLC has CICM CPD Accreditation for Category 1A: Passive Self Learning (1 point per hour) and is approved for 11 ACEM CPD hours. This event has been accredited in the 2023–2025 ACRRM PD Program for 8.5 Educational Activity Hours and 2.5 Performance Review Hours. CPD points may be claimed from other professional organisations. Certificates of completion are available.

Training modules

There are 13 free online training modules covering end of life law in all Australian States and Territories. The modules have interactive exercises, legal cases, clinical case studies, vignettes, self-assessment quizzes, and further readings to promote reflective learning. The training program is self-paced and can be completed on any device.

MODULE 1

The role of law in end of life care

Three modules are available. Participants should select the module most relevant to their discipline and complete only that module. All participants complete the same Modules 2–13.

Medical practitioners and the role of law in end of life care

This module explores what legal issues can arise in practice and what role law plays in end of life care. It also outlines how knowing these laws can help with clinical practice.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcome

- » Describe the role of law in end of life clinical practice.

Nurses and the role of law in end of life care

This module explores what legal issues can arise in nursing practice and what role law plays in end of life care. It also outlines how knowing these laws can help with nursing practice.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcome

- » Describe the role of law in end of life nursing practice.

Allied and other health professionals: The role of law in end of life care

This module explores what legal issues can arise in clinical practice and what role law plays in end of life care. It also outlines how knowing these laws can help with clinical practice.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcome

- » Describe the role of law in end of life clinical practice.

MODULE 2

Capacity and consent to medical treatment

Part 1 of this module explores the requirements of valid consent. Part 2 explores when an adult will have capacity to make decisions about medical treatment.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Identify when consent to medical treatment is required and when it will be valid.
- » Define the concept of capacity, and explain how it is determined.

MODULE 3

Withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment

This module focuses on withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment from adults.

It establishes a foundation for later modules on Advance Care Planning and Advance Care Directives (Module 4), Substitute decision-making for medical treatment (Module 5), Futile or non-beneficial treatment (Module 8), and Emergency treatment for adults (Module 9).

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcomes

Identify:

- » When a decision to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment can be made.
- » The circumstances under which such a decision needs or does not need to be followed.

MODULE 4

Advance Care Planning and Advance Care Directives

This module explores Advance Care Planning and the law relating to Advance Care Directives, including when an Advance Care Directive can apply, and when it must be followed.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

Identify:

- » What an Advance Care Directive is, and the information it can contain.
- » When an Advance Care Directive can apply, and when it must be followed.

MODULE 5

Substitute decision-making for medical treatment

This module explores who can be a substitute decision-maker for an adult, when they can make decisions, how they should make decisions, and when a substitute decision-maker's decision needs to be followed.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcomes

Identify:

- » What decisions a substitute decision-maker can make, and how they should make decisions.
- » The appropriate substitute decision-maker for a person who does not have capacity.
- » When a substitute decision-maker's decision needs to be followed.

MODULE 6

Legal protection for administering pain and symptom relief

Part 1 of this module explores the law on providing pain and symptom relief at the end of life, and the doctrine of double effect. It explains how the lawful provision of pain and symptom relief is different from voluntary assisted dying. Part 2 considers the legal status of palliative sedation and voluntarily stopping eating and drinking.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Explain the doctrine of double effect, and its application in practice.
- » Differentiate between the lawful provision of pain and symptom relief, and voluntary assisted dying.

MODULE 7

Children and end of life decision-making

This module explores the law relating to parental decision-making about end of life treatment for children (Part 1), and end of life decision-making by competent children (Part 2). The law on emergency treatment for children is discussed in Part 3.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Identify who may make decisions for children about life-sustaining treatment.
- » Explain when a competent child may be able to consent to or refuse their own treatment.
- » Identify when emergency treatment can be provided to children without consent.

MODULE 8

Futile or non-beneficial treatment

This module explores the law about futile or non-beneficial treatment, and when it can be withheld or withdrawn from an adult or child at the end of their life.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcomes

- » Explain who decides when treatment is futile or non-beneficial, and how it is decided.
- » Identify when a decision to withhold or withdraw futile or non-beneficial treatment can be made.

MODULE 9

Urgent treatment for adults

This module explores how the law responds to situations where decisions about urgent (emergency) treatment are needed for adults. It explains when life-sustaining treatment can be given in an emergency (including whether consent is needed); and when life-sustaining treatment can be withheld or withdrawn in an emergency.

Completion time: 30 minutes

Learning outcomes

Identify when life-sustaining treatment can be:

- » given in an emergency without consent.
- » withheld or withdrawn in an emergency.

MODULE 10

Managing conflict

This module explores what legal and other avenues are available to manage conflict around end of life decision-making. The focus is on disputes about treatment for a person who does not have capacity, as this is where conflict most often arises.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Identify clinical and legal processes for managing disputes where a person does not have decision-making capacity.
- » Describe the role of guardianship bodies, courts and tribunals in resolving disputes about medical treatment.

MODULE 11

Voluntary assisted dying

This module explores the law on voluntary assisted dying (VAD) in Australia, and its intersection with laws on medical treatment decision-making, and pain and symptom relief.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Describe the legal status of VAD in Australia.
- » Understand the eligibility criteria and processes for accessing VAD in jurisdictions where it is lawful.
- » Differentiate between VAD and other practices including providing pain and symptom relief, and withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment.

MODULE 12

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and end of life law

This module explores the law on end of life decision-making in the context of caring for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

Completion time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes

- » Understand legal considerations that can arise when caring for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and families at the end of life.
- » Recognise how health professionals can provide Culturally Safe and Culturally Responsive end of life care.

MODULE 13

Inclusive end of life decision-making with people from diverse populations

This module explores the law on end of life decision-making in the context of caring for LGBTIQ+ people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse and/or refugee backgrounds, people with disability, and people with frailty.

Completion time: 90 minutes

Learning outcomes

- » Understand legal considerations that can arise when caring for LGBTIQ+ people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse and/or refugee backgrounds, people with disability, and people with frailty.
- » Recognise how health professionals can provide safe, inclusive, accessible end of life care to people from diverse populations, and their families and support networks.

Register for the ELLC online training modules at ellc.edu.au

To receive further information and updates please email endoflifelaw@qut.edu.au



About End of Life Law for Clinicians

The ELLC training program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health as a National Palliative Care Project. It is administered by the Australian Centre for Health Law Research, Faculty of Business and Law, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), in partnership with the Faculty of Health, QUT.