

Implementing updated Professional capabilities

November 2025

Leadership as a practice

Executive Summary

This document provides information to assist registered medical radiation practitioners, other health practitioners, employers, health organisations, professional associations and others to support the implementation of updated Professional capabilities for medical radiation practitioners

Leadership and stewardship are key professional skills that apply regardless of job title. Every health practitioner shares responsibility for interprofessional practice, collaboration in patient-centred care and the wellbeing of the overall health system.

Leadership and stewardship as a practice

Leadership and stewardship within medical radiation practice are best recognised as evolving practices rather than specific roles or titles. Leadership is realised when professionals collaborate, harness overlapping skills and knowledge, integrate expertise challenges are addressed collectively, and shared understanding is fostered. It becomes apparent through dialogue, decision-making, and the incremental actions that influence care delivery. Similarly, stewardship encompasses ethical conduct, the safeguarding of patient wellbeing, prudent resource management, the promotion of a safety and learning culture, and the preservation of the profession's integrity. In this context, leadership and stewardship are ongoing and collective endeavours, embedded in the daily routines and relationships central to clinical practice.

Professional agency

The foundation of effective leadership and stewardship practice lies in the principle of agency. Professional agency is reflected in individual decisions within established ethical, regulatory, and professional frameworks. Having agency in professional practice means that practitioners acknowledge their autonomy and accountability as part of their roles as registered health professionals and recognise their responsibility to maintain public trust and confidence in the profession and the healthcare system.

Working Across Professions

Medical radiation practitioners typically operate within multiprofessional teams comprising radiologists, oncologists, physicists, nurses, and other allied health professionals. Effective practice relies on managing interprofessional relationships well. Leadership is shown through listening, contributing respectfully and confidently, recognising colleagues' expertise, and building trust across disciplines. Stewardship is expressed in ensuring resources are coordinated effectively, duplication is minimised, and care is delivered seamlessly to patients. By exercising professional agency within teams, practitioners influence decision-making, enhance collective outcomes, and strengthen the health system's capacity to respond to patient needs.

Graduate practitioners and leadership.

Graduate medical radiation practitioners demonstrate leadership through everyday clinical interactions. By engaging with patients, contributing to team discussions, showing initiative grounded in evidence-based practice, learning from colleagues, adapting to new situations, and modelling professional behaviour. By recognising leadership as an essential part of their practice, graduates can see themselves as active contributors from the outset, shaping team culture, modelling professional standards, and laying the foundations for stewardship throughout their careers.

What leadership and stewardship look like in practice

A few examples include

- Exercise sound professional judgement, uphold ethical integrity, and demonstrate compassion in clinical decision-making and communication, particularly during challenging conversations.
- Proactively identify, respectfully challenge and address risks, errors, or instances of low-value care, while fostering transparent dialogue within multiprofessional teams.
- Provide leadership and support for initiatives aimed at the sustainable use of healthcare resources, taking into account environmental considerations, cultural safety, health equity, and the implications of climate change.
- Offer mentorship and guidance to colleagues, including students and early-career practitioners, to enhance their professional agency and confidence.
- Engage in collaborative partnerships across teams, organisations, and communities to co-design innovative models of care and drive improvements in performance and organisational culture.
- Promote and maintain public trust in the profession by consistently demonstrating fairness, equity, and cultural safety in both practice and decision-making.

Embedding leadership and stewardship

Employers, supervisors, and colleagues play an essential role in fostering leadership and stewardship, particularly for graduates entering practice. By creating environments where practitioners have agency in their practice, can share ideas, reflect on experiences, and participate in decision-making teams helps them see leadership as a collaborative, everyday practice. A graduate might show leadership by initiating a huddle to address a patient safety concern or demonstrate stewardship by suggesting ways to reduce unnecessary clinical waste. These actions, though small, illustrate how leadership and stewardship are embedded in daily routines.

Supervisors and experienced team members enhance these competencies by modelling ethical behaviours, providing mentorship, and creating opportunities for interprofessional practice and learning. Within these environments, practitioners develop the ability to identify overlapping skills and knowledge, leveraging the expertise of colleagues from other health professions to provide safe, effective, and coordinated care. Prioritising collaboration and shared responsibility fosters practitioner confidence and ensures patient-centred practice so that patient safety remains paramount.

How health organisations, managers and educators can support these capabilities

- embed leadership and stewardship expectations into orientation and workplace culture.
- provide opportunities for mentoring, peer learning, and interprofessional collaboration.
- encourage reflective practice and feedback conversations
- creating environments of respectful challenge
- recognise and reward contributions to quality improvement and safe care.
- align workplace policies with stewardship principles