



GENERAL PRACTICE ACCREDITATION

Introduction

Accreditation provides a benchmark for quality care and risk management, to protect patients from harm and aid general practices in identifying and addressing any gaps in their systems and processes.

This document has been created to provide more information about what's involved in accreditation, including the benefits and links to further information and resources.

General practice accreditation overview

Accreditation is the independent assessment of a general practice against the requirements outlined in the Standards of General Practice, which are written and published by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). To access these see, [RACGP - Standards, 5th Ed.](#)

There are three core criteria which must be met if a general practice or health service wants to gain [accreditation against the Standards](#). These are:

1. Practice or health services operates within the model of general practice described in the [RACGP definition of general practice](#)
2. GP services are predominantly of a general practice nature
3. Practice or health service is capable of meeting all mandatory indicators in the standards.

General practices who wish to gain formal accreditation against the standards are required to register with an independent accreditation agency. There are four [Accreditation Agencies](#) in Australia.

Supporting information to help practices meet indicators in the Standards 5th edition can be found in the [RACGP - Resource guide](#).

It is important to note that general practice accreditation is voluntary and there is a cost to practices for undertaking accreditation.

By undergoing an independent assessment, the award of accreditation reassures practice owners, practice managers, staff, funding bodies, consumers, and patients that the practice is meeting minimum safety and quality standards, as outlined by the RACGP.

What does general practice accreditation involve?

Accreditation is a comprehensive program which involves the:

- practice registering with an accreditation agency
- practice completing a self-assessment with their chosen agency (via online portal)
- practice team reviewing the practices systems and process to ensure they meet the current RACGP Standards
- independent assessment conducted by a team of surveyors onsite at the practice.

Once a practice meets the standards, they receive accreditation for a three-year period.

What are the benefits of being an accredited general practice?

Financial incentives	Accreditation is a prerequisite for accessing grants from Medicare Australia, such as the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) and Workforce Incentive Program (WIP). Practices can receive PIP QI payments during the period they are preparing for accreditation, however, if the practice cannot provide PIP with their certificate of accreditation (issued by their chosen accreditation agency) by their registration expiry date, then the PIP eligibility and payments will cease.
Patient care	Accreditation can lead to improved patient safety and overall health outcomes, by helping to identify gaps in systems and processes, which enhances practice efficiency.
Workforce	Once accredited, the practice is eligible to engage with GP training organisations to employ GP registrars and is eligible to engage with universities regarding medical student placements.
Professional reputation	Accreditation promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement in the practice environment, reducing business risk, improved practice efficiency and increased insurance provider recognition.
Team and staff benefits	Accreditation develops staff skills and engages the practice team in continuous quality improvement. It unlocks many opportunities for practice staff, such as CPD hours for practice managers, nursing staff and general practitioners.

Key advice for practices

Allow plenty of time and start working on documentation early – it is not uncommon for practices to start preparing 12-18 months in advance of their surveyor's accreditation visit.

Once registered for accreditation, agencies will require the practice to complete an online self-assessment against the standards.

Practices are encouraged to use the support staff at their chosen accreditation agency. Each agency also has policy and procedure templates that practices can adapt to suit their clinic.

Murray PHN Quality Improvement Consultants (QICs) are available to assist practices with quality improvement, which is a major focus of accreditation (there is a whole module dedicated to it under the 5th edition standards.) QICs can coach practices in quality improvement and assist to develop quality improvement activities aligning to accreditation using the Model for Improvement and Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles.

The practice manager should be encouraged to ensure the whole team is involved. Roles should be assigned to key members of the practice team to help support the accreditation process.

Staff should take time to review the RACGP Standards as they are regularly reviewed and updated.

Practices that are undertaking re-accreditation should be encouraged to read through their last visit report to identify areas for improvement.

Practices can also:

- start to organise their patient feedback activity by implementing patient surveys
- ensure all clinicians are up-to-date with training
- develop a priority task list and start working to update documentation/processes/procedures as per RACGP standards
- schedule a final briefing with their staff in preparation for the accreditation surveyors practice visit.

Other useful links

- [Accreditation common non-conformities](#)
- [Resources and support | AGPAL](#)

Accreditation agencies

AGPAL	AGPAL Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited
Quality Practice Accreditation (QPA)	Quality Practice Accreditation (qpa.health)
Global Mark Pty Ltd	Global-Mark Confidence with Commitment
The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards	The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)

Contact us

For more information or support contact your local Quality Improvement Consultant.

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