

Standards for general practices

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RACGP

Overview

- The RACGP and Standards Expert Committee, our vision and mission.
- Accreditation and its benefits.
- Eligibility for and process of accreditation.
- Structure of the Standards.
- Key updates made to the fifth edition Standards.
- Supporting resources.
- Development of the sixth edition.
- Support and involvement.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

The RACGP is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation, representing more than 43,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice including four out of five general practitioners (GPs) in rural Australia.

The RACGP develops standards, resources and guidelines to support GPs in providing their patients with world-class healthcare and help with the unique issues that affect their practices.

The Standards team and RACGP Expert Committee

The RACGP Expert Committee – Standards for general practices is established to:

- develop and maintain standards and associated resources for general practices, including GP education practices, medical deputising services and other primary medical services,
- ensure the standards reflect quality practice and are independent of government policies and initiatives,
- monitor the development and application of relevant standards in Australia and overseas and oversee the RACGP's role in the development and monitoring of standards in related areas,
- establish a mechanism for standards interpretation with organisations that accredit against the RACGP Standards, and
- ensure adequate communication about standards for general practices within the RACGP, its members, the medical profession and the Australian community.

The Standards team and RACGP Expert Committee



Vision

All Australian general practices deliver care that is safe, of high-quality and continuously improving.



Mission

To co-produce contemporary Standards so that patients who visit an accredited general practice in Australia can expect safe and high-quality care.

Standards for general practices



The RACGP has developed standards for primary healthcare settings for over three decades. The *Standards for general practices* are profession led and form a foundational benchmark for quality and safety in Australian general practice.

The Standards were first published in 1996 and have evolved across five editions. The fifth edition was published in 2017 and has been updated several times since.

The Standards:

- improve the quality and safety of health services of general practices
- are focussed on outcomes and patients, not on process
- support general practices by identifying and addressing any gaps in their systems and processes.



Structure of the Standards

The Standards are divided thematically across three modules:

- Core
- Quality improvement (QI)
- General practice (GP).

Each module contains several standards (eg Rights and needs of patients, Content of patient health records, etc), each with relevant criteria for practices to meet.

Each criterion is presented in the Standards with:

- relevant indicators for the practice to meet
- explanatory notes describing why these indicators are important in general practice
- strategies for a practice to meet the criterion/indicators.

Core module

Core Standard 1

Communication and patient participation

Core Standard 2

Rights and needs of patients

Core Standard 3

Practice governance and management

Core Standard 4

Health promotion and preventive activities

Core Standard 5

Clinical management of health issues

Core Standard 6

Information management

Core Standard 7

Content of patient health records

Core Standard 8

Education and training of non-clinical staff

*Each of the standards included
within the Core module*

Indicators in the Standards

- Outcome-focused – indicators focus on the outcome or the intent, rather than the process.
- Patient-centred – indicators focus on what the patient receives, rather than what the practice does.
- Practices can choose different ways to show how they meet the intent of many indicators.
- Details on the indicators, including the rationale for their inclusion and ways a practice can meet them, are included in the explanatory notes.
- High-risk and regulation guided areas remain prescriptive.

Accreditation

A general practice can demonstrate its commitment to safety, quality and continuous improvement through achieving independent accreditation against the Standards.

Accreditation against the Standards is voluntary.

Incentives for accreditation include access to:

- Practice Incentives Program (PIP)
- Workplace Incentive Program (WIP)
- MyMedicare.

The National General Practice Accreditation (NGPA) Scheme ensures consistent assessment of general practices against the Standards.

*There are over 8000
general practices in
Australia and more than
83% are accredited
against the Standards.*

Process of accreditation

- Accreditation agencies approved under the NGPA can:
 - determine a practice's eligibility for accreditation; then
 - assess practices against the Standards.
- The agency will work with the practice to help prepare them for the accreditation process.
- Assessments are collaborative and based on common sense – surveyors will not seek to penalise or exclude a practice from accreditation due to technicalities.

Eligibility

Definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation

For a practice or health service to seek accreditation:

- it must provide comprehensive, patient-centred, whole-person and continuous care; and
- its services must be predominantly* of a general practice nature.

* more than 50% of the practice's general practitioners' clinical time (ie collectively), and more than 50% of services for which Medicare benefits are claimed or could be claimed (from that practice) are in general practice.

Eligibility

Interpretive guide

For the accreditation of general practices under the new definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation



The interpretive guide covers:

- services excluded from general practice accreditation
- application of Standards to non-traditional general practices
- assessing whether a practice meets the definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation, including advice on indicators related to:
 - practice facilities
 - privacy and dedicated spaces
 - waiting area for patients
 - toilets and hand-cleaning facilities
 - practice equipment
 - maintaining practice equipment
 - infrastructure for patients with disabilities or impairment
 - staff responsibilities
 - patient health records
 - patient feedback requirements

Key updates to the 5th edition



Key updates to the 5th edition

Collecting and recording sex and gender

- Definitions aligned to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables.
- A new unflagged Indicator that asks practices to separately record, where relevant, each patient's assigned sex at birth, variations of sex characteristics and gender.
- Supporting explanatory materials across areas of the Standards, that support
 - collecting information about sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation
 - practice consideration and respect for patient identity and bodily diversity
 - recording and implementing names and pronouns used by patients.

Key updates to the 5th edition

Telehealth

- Additional supporting materials across areas of the Standards, including:
 - appointment types
 - managing contact with patients for a telehealth appointment
 - using interpreters and other communication services over telehealth
 - confidentiality and privacy when using telehealth
 - including questions about telehealth in your patient feedback questionnaire
 - privacy when providing consultations by telehealth
 - equipment for practices providing telehealth.
- The Standards refer practices to the RACGP's *Guide to providing telephone and video consultations in general practice*, which helps practices to provide safe and effective telehealth consultations to patients.

Key updates to the 5th edition

Infection prevention and control guidelines

- Provide guidance on planning and implementing high standards of infection prevention and control in your workplace by addressing:
 - the basics of infection prevention and control (including principles, hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, aseptic technique and levels of precaution)
 - managing risks to staff (including staff screening immunisation and infection management, sharps, and exposure to blood and other body substances)
 - managing the practice environment (including cleaning, laundry and waste management)
 - managing equipment (including reprocessing reusable medical devices)
 - managing outbreaks (including disease surveillance and outbreak response)
 - practice set-up (including practice design, fit-out, equipment and consumables).
- Intended as a guide to you implement infection prevention and control procedures. Practices aren't accredited against the IPC Guidelines, but may refer to them in meeting relevant criteria in the Standards.

Key updates to the 5th edition

Emergency equipment

- GP1.1▶C – Our recorded phone message advises patients to call 000 in case of an emergency.
- GP5.2▶E – Our practice has a defibrillator.
- Electrocardiograph is included in the list of mandatory practice equipment (GP5.2▶A), while practices must have timely access to a spirometer (GP5.2▶D).

Key updates to the 5th edition

Recent minor updates

- **Maintaining register for S8 medicines:** As per indicator QI2.2►E of the Standards, your practice must acquire, store, administer, supply and dispose of medicines, samples and medical consumables according to manufacturers' directions and relevant laws.

Key updates to the 5th edition

Recent minor updates

- **Managing high-risk results identified outside normal opening hours:**
Where previously practices needed to ensure that diagnostic services were given the contact details of the practitioner who ordered an investigation, the Standards now note that a delegated practitioner or after-hours service are appropriate alternative delegations.

GP2.2► E High-risk (seriously abnormal and life-threatening) results identified outside normal opening hours are managed by our practice.

You must:

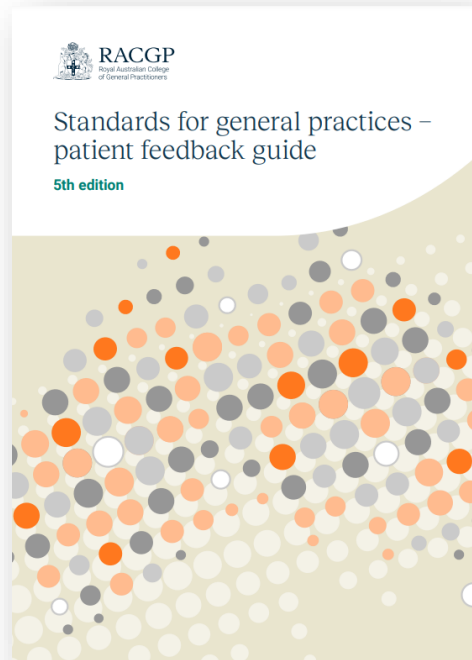
- have a documented policy that outlines the process for your practice's management for high-risk results identified outside of normal opening hours
- give diagnostic services the contact details of the practitioner who ordered the investigation **or a delegated practitioner or after-hours service.**

Key updates to the 5th edition

Web version

The screenshot shows the RACGP website's 'Standards for general practices Table of contents' page. The header includes the RACGP logo and navigation links: Education, Clinical resources, Running a practice, Advocacy, and News. A search bar and a 'LOGIN / JOIN' button are also present. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: Home > Running a practice > Resources to improve the safety and quality of general practice > Standards 5th edition Suite > Standards for general practices (5th edition) > Table of contents. On the left, there is a thumbnail of the 'Standards for general practices 5th edition' cover with a 'DOWNLOAD PDF' button. A search bar labeled 'Search guideline' is located above the main content. The main content is titled 'Introduction to the Standards' and includes a description: 'The RACGP's Standards for general practices (5th edition): A benchmark for quality care and risk management in Australian general practices.' Below this, there is a list of links: Introduction to the Standards, Development of this edition, Changes from the previous edition, Evidence-based standards, and Accreditation. The page also shows 'Core Module' sections: 'Core Standard 1 - Communication and patient participation' with a description 'Our practice provides timely and accurate communications that are patient-centred.' and 'See criteria' link, and 'Core Standard 2 - Rights and needs of patients' with a description 'Our practice respects the rights and needs of patients.'

Supporting resources



Sixth edition Standards

- Undertaking consumer engagement for the development of the sixth edition.
- Addressing recommendations made by the Department of Health and Aged Care's Accreditation Arrangements Review and aiming to:
 - adopt a stronger focus on patient safety and quality
 - reduce documentation
 - reduce the number of indicators
 - revise the structure and format.
- Some new areas of focus, including digital care and AI, environmental sustainability and practice culture.

Method



Method



Q&A

Accessing the Standards

The screenshot displays the RACGP website's navigation menu. The 'Practice Standards' section is expanded, showing a grid of links. The link for 'Standards for general practices (5th edition)' is highlighted with a mouse cursor. The website header includes the RACGP logo, navigation tabs for 'Education', 'Clinical resources', 'Running a practice', 'Advocacy', and 'News', a search bar, and a 'LOGIN / JOIN' button. The main navigation bar contains 'Practice management', 'Practice resources', 'Practice Standards', 'Information security', and 'Technology'.

RACGP Education Clinical resources **Running a practice** Advocacy News

Practice management Practice resources **Practice Standards** Information security Technology

Standards 5th edition Suite

- [Standards for general practices \(5th edition\)](#)
- Standards for after-hours and medical deputising services
- Infection prevention and control guidelines
- Standards for point-of-care testing
- Patient feedback requirements
- Patient feedback guide
- Resource guide
- Factsheets and position statements
- Accreditation

Interpretive guides

- Interpretative guide for non-traditional general practices for the purposes of accreditation
- Interpretative guide for Aboriginal community controlled health services

Other health care standards

- Standards for Patient-Centred Medical Homes
- Standards for health services in Australian immigration detention facilities
- Standards for health services in Australian prisons
- Standards for Garrison Health Facilities in the Australian Defence Force
- Peer audits for quality and safety
- Standards for general practice residential aged care

Standards News

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