

# Standards for general practice

6th edition



# About the RACGP

We're Australia's largest and most established general practice college with more than 50,000 members.

We train more than 90% of Australia's GP registrars and support our members working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, remote, rural, regional, metro and outer metropolitan areas.

Our core commitment is to support GPs and general practices to address the primary healthcare needs of all Australians.



# Standards for general practices

The RACGP has developed profession-led standards for over 30 years, setting the benchmark for quality and safety in Australian general practice. First published in 1996, the Standards have evolved through five editions, with the sixth edition reflecting modern priorities.

The Standards:

- Protect patients through evidence-based, person-centred care
- Address contemporary priorities: digital health, cultural safety, sustainability
- Promote continuous improvement for safe, effective, equitable care
- Provide clarity and consistency for practices, patients, and accrediting bodies
- Align with international best practice and the Quintuple Aim for optimising healthcare.



## Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

- Policy direction and funding support for the NGPA scheme.



## The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

- Governs the NGPA Scheme, ensuring consistency and transparency.



## Royal Australian College of General Practices

- Develops and maintains the *Standards for general practices*.

## Accreditation Agencies

- Independently assess practices against the Standards.



## **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.*

# Guiding documents and inputs

Quintuple Aim for health care improvement:

*Patient experience*

*Population health*

*Reducing costs*

*Care team wellbeing*

*Health equity*

Comprehensive literature review of current evidence

Department of Health and Aged Care Accreditation Reviews

National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards

Principles of the International Society for Quality in Health Care  
International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua)

Consumer participation

Piloting and public consultation with members, practice staff and key stakeholders

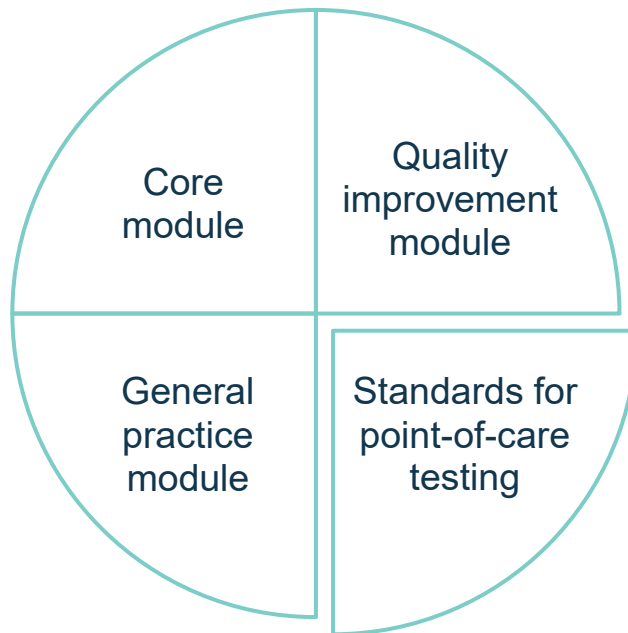
# Aims when developing the new edition

Compared to the current fifth edition, the updated Standards are designed to:

- Be no more onerous
- Be no more costly
- Add to the quality and safety within general practice
- Have fewer criteria
- Provide greater clarity in their guidance.

# Structure of the Standards

## 5th edition – Modular structure



- 3 modules
- 17 standards
- 44 criteria
- **117 mandatory indicators**
- 8 aspirational indicators

## 6th edition

Foundations of general practice standard

Clinical governance standard

Patient participation standard

Continuous quality improvement standard

Optional: Point-of-care testing standard

- 4 standards
- 35 criteria categories
- **88 mandatory criteria**
- 3 aspirational criteria

- 1 optional standard
- 8 criteria categories
- 17 mandatory & 1 aspirational criteria

# Structure of the Standards

The following structure is used throughout the Standards:

- **Consumer expectation statement** – describing what consumers expect from their general practice
- **Criteria and sub-criteria (bullets)** – these are activities the practice needs to complete, or evidence it needs to present.
- **Guidance**
  - *Why this is important* – rationale for including criteria in the Standards.
  - *Meeting these criteria* – further exploration of the criteria and ways a practice could meet them.

# Consumer expectation statements

The RACGP has partnered with consumers to co-design consumer expectation statements that:

- capture the meaning and importance of each criterion to consumers
- empower patients by giving them a voice in the standards that govern their care.

*Examples of consumer expectation statements in the Standards*

## **PP3 – Respectful, culturally appropriate and culturally safe care**

I expect to be treated in a respectful way that considers my cultural background and individual choices.

## **PP5 – Accessibility of services**

I expect that I can access services that meet my needs, regardless of my abilities.



Standard 1

Foundations of  
general practice

## Foundations of general practice standard

- Artificial intelligence
- Clinical autonomy of practitioners
- Confidentiality and privacy of health and other information
- Defining and planning for the practice
- Digital health technologies
- Environmental sustainability and responsibility
- Induction, training and supporting performance
- Information security
- Practice team culture, safety and involvement
- Registration and qualifications of healthcare practitioners
- Response planning

The **Foundations of general practice** standard encompasses the fundamental principles and structures necessary for the effective operation and management of a general practice.

New areas in this standard include:

- Artificial intelligence
- Defining and planning for the practice
- Digital health technologies
- Environmental sustainability and responsibility
- Practice team culture.

## Foundations of general practice standard

### Defining and planning for the practice

- Strategic approach aligned with mission, values, safety, and quality.
- Strategic planning and measuring progress.
- Operational planning and measuring objectives.
- Keeping policies and operational documents current and accessible.
- Processes to review and resolve ethical issues.
- Governance processes for safe, high-quality care and accountable decision-making.
- Identifying and managing governance risks.

## Foundations of general practice standard

### Defining and planning for your practice

Foundation for safe, high-quality care

Support sustainability and resilience

Promote accountability and transparency

Align with best practice

## Foundations of general practice standard

# Environmental sustainability and responsibility

### **Climate resilience**

- Identifies climate-related risks.
- Implements strategies to improve resilience.

### **Minimising environmental impact**

- Documents strategies to reduce environmental impact and emissions.

### **Responsibility for sustainability**

- Assigns at least one team member responsibility for environmental sustainability.

# Foundations of general practice standard

## Induction, training and supporting performance

### **Induction**

- System to induct all members of the practice team.
- Designated responsibility for induction.

### **Training**

- Role-specific and ongoing training for employed team members, including person-centred care, family, domestic and sexual violence and Medicare billing.

### **Professional development**

### **CPR training**

## Foundations of general practice standard

# Practice team culture, safety and involvement

### **Safety, health, and wellbeing**

- WHS policy, risk mitigation, support after emergencies/incidents.
- Systems to protect staff from aggression/violence.
- Workload monitoring and wellbeing analysis.

### **Team involvement**

- Systematic approach to gathering team feedback.
- Processes to escalate issues and discuss administrative matters.
- Leadership actively seeks input from all team members.

## Foundations of general practice standard

# Digital health technologies

### **Safe and secure use**

- Informed consent for digital health tools.
- Documented processes for assessing, implementing and managing digital technologies.
- Access to technical expertise for safe and effective use.

# Foundations of general practice standard

## Artificial intelligence

### **Safe, secure and accountable use**

- Informed and documented consent for AI-assisted care.
- Data deidentification unless identified data is explicitly authorised and clinically necessary.
- Governance processes, clear accountability, and clinical oversight.
- Team involvement in planning and training for AI use.

### **Evaluation and monitoring**

- Process to assess risks before implementation.
- Ongoing monitoring, review and quality improvement to identify unintended consequences.



Standard 2

Clinical governance

## Clinical governance standard

- Clinical information systems
- Facilitating complete patient health records
- Follow-up systems
- Immunisations
- Infection prevention and control, including reprocessing
- Maintaining vaccine potency
- Managing clinical risks and incidents
- Patient identification
- Practice environment
- Practice equipment
- Provision of clinical and medicines guidelines
- Research
- Transitions of care

The **Clinical governance** standard incorporates the systems that practices use to manage risk and protect the safety of patients and members of the practice team.

New areas in this standard include:

- Changes to digital clinical information systems
- 'Facilitation of' patient health records
- Provision of access to information and resources to reduce inappropriate antibiotic use
- Risk assessment when reprocessing reusable medical devices.

## Clinical governance standard

# Clinical information systems

### **Digital clinical information system for managing patient health information**

- Uses a digital clinical information system for patient health records.
- Maintains up-to-date health summaries and consultation records in all systems used.
- Has processes for managing multiple systems, including clear documentation and practitioner awareness.

## Clinical governance standard

# Facilitating complete patient health records

- Complete demographic and identification details in codable fields
- Coded health summaries including that all (100%) active patient health records document known allergies or indicate that the patient has no known allergies in a codable field.
- Collection of ethnicity, birth sex, gender, preferred pronouns in codable fields (*aspirational*)

## Clinical governance standard

### Provision of clinical and medicines guidelines

#### **Environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient clinical practices**

- Supports clinicians to adopt sustainable and climate-resilient practices.

#### **Reducing inappropriate antibiotic prescribing**

- Provides resources for clinicians and patients on antimicrobial stewardship

## Clinical governance standard

# Managing clinical risks and incidents

### **Clinical risk management system**

- Documented process, risk register, mitigation procedures, and leadership reporting.
- Systems to receive and share public health notifications.

### **Incident and near-miss management**

- Maintains incident register; non-punitive reporting culture.
- Investigates causes and implements improvements.
- Includes AI-related incident management.

## Clinical governance standard

# Infection prevention and control, including reprocessing

### **Reprocessing in accordance with the Infection prevention and control guidelines**

- Practice-specific infection control policy detailing risk assessment for reprocessing
- Reprocesses in accordance with the RACGP Infection prevention and control guidelines or another model that meets the current Australian standard.

### **Record of sterilisation load numbers for tracing**

- Process to record sterilisation load numbers for each patient when sterile items have been used.

## Clinical governance standard

### Practice environment

#### **Safe, clean, and appropriate environment**

- Ensures privacy (auditory/visual), hygiene, accessible toilets, adequate space.
- Cleaning procedures per guidelines; manages ventilation and cultural considerations.
- Applies to practices with or without owned premises.



Standard 3

Patient participation

## Patient participation standard

- Accessibility of services
- Care when the practice is not open
- Communications
- Engaging consumers
- Health promotion and preventative care
- Information about your practice
- Informed consent
- Open disclosure and complaints
- Respectful, culturally appropriate and culturally safe care
- Responsive system for patient care

The **Patient participation** standard encompasses person-centred care – so that general practices prioritise patient needs, values and preferences and encourage patients to take an active role in their own healthcare.

### New areas in this standard include:

- Broadened informed consent to include third-party presence arrangements, and clinical procedures and treatments
- Engaging consumers
- The provision of care when the practice is not open.

## Patient participation standard

### Informed consent

#### **Informed consent for clinical procedures and treatments.**

- Processes for clinicians to obtain informed consent for clinical procedures and treatments.

#### **Informed consent for when a third-party is present.**

- Facilitate documentation of the patient's consent to the presence of a third party arranged by the practice.

## Patient participation standard

### Health promotion and preventative care

**Information about preventative care, illness prevention and health promotion.**

**Share information with patients about environmental issues relevant to the healthcare they receive.**

## Patient participation standard

### Engaging consumers

#### **Consumer engagement for service improvement.**

- Uses formal and informal methods to gather feedback
- Analyses and acts on insights
- Informs consumers of actions taken.



Standard 4

Continuous quality  
improvement

## Continuous quality improvement

- Continuous quality improvement activities

The continuous quality improvement (CQI) standard encourages general practices to continuously evaluate, monitor and improve the quality of their services to enhance patient care and experiences.

New areas in this standard include:

- Completing at least one clinical improvement activity every 12 months, of which one must include the use of coded clinical data
- Environmental sustainability improvement activities.

## Continuous quality improvement

# Continuous quality improvement activities

### **Quality improvement system and activities**

- Designates a trained lead for CQI
- Sets and monitors performance indicators
- Undertakes at least one QI activity every 12 months, one of which includes the use of coded clinical data
- Documents team feedback, actions and outcomes
- Reports to leadership.

Continuous quality  
improvement

## Continuous quality improvement activities

### **Environmental performance and emissions reduction**

- Assesses and reports progress on sustainability goals; implements actions to reduce carbon emissions.

### **Measuring environmental footprint**

- Measures and manages the practice's overall environmental footprint. (*aspirational*)



# Standards for general practice

6th edition

The *Standards for general practices* (6th edition) will be published in 2026.

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