

FACT SHEET
for healthcare
services

Accreditation to the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards

About the Standards

The National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards (the Standards) describe the processes and structures that are needed in healthcare services to help keep people safe and improve the quality of health care.

They comprise of three individual standards:



Clinical Governance Standard, which describes the resources, processes, policies and procedures needed for the delivery of safe, high-quality health care.



Partnering with Consumers Standard, which describes what should be in place to support patients and consumers to be partners in their own care.



Clinical Safety Standard, which addresses safety and quality risks commonly encountered in primary and community healthcare services, such as preventing and controlling infections and communicating for safety.

About accreditation

Accreditation is the outcome of an independent assessment process undertaken to verify your healthcare service's implementation of the Standards. Assessment and the awarding of accreditation provide assurances to the community that a healthcare service has the systems and processes in place to meet expected patient safety and quality standards of health care.

Accreditation to the Standards is voluntary. In some circumstances, a healthcare service may be required to be accredited to the Standards to satisfy contractual, regulatory or licencing requirements.

Assessment process

To be awarded accreditation to the Standards, your healthcare services will need to implement the Standards and undertake an assessment process, conducted by an independent accrediting agency approved by the Commission.

Contact details of accrediting agencies are available on the [Commission's website](#).

Your healthcare service will need to enter a contractual arrangement with an accrediting agency of your choice. Once this has occurred, the assessment process will generally involve:

1. **Application for not applicable actions** – your healthcare service may apply to the nominated accrediting agency for relevant actions to be rated ‘not applicable’ at assessment.
2. **Initial assessment** – using the selected model of assessment, your accrediting agency will:
 - Review evidence provided by your healthcare service to demonstrate your service has implemented the relevant actions in the Standards and award a rating for each action
 - Advise of any actions rated ‘not met’ at the time of the assessment
 - Provide an initial report to your healthcare service within five business days of the conclusion of the initial assessment.
3. **Remediation period** – where relevant actions assessed have been rated ‘not met’, you will be given 60 business days to implement changes to demonstrate you have met the requirements of the specified actions.
4. **Final assessment** – the accrediting agency will conduct a final assessment within 65 business days of your Initial Assessment, using the selected model of assessment, to determine if actions rated ‘not met’ have been remediated, as well as whether any improvements have been made to actions rated ‘met with recommendations’.
5. **Determination of accreditation** – the accrediting agency will determine whether your healthcare service has satisfied the requirements of the assessment. Your healthcare service will be awarded accreditation if all relevant actions in the Standards are rated as ‘met’ or ‘met with recommendations’. The period of accreditation awarded will be dependent on the model of assessment used.

Attachment 1 describes the detailed steps for the assessment process for the Standards.

Model of assessment

There are four models of assessment available, described in **Table 1** (on next page), for healthcare services seeking accreditation to the Standards. This flexible approach recognises the varying stages of readiness and engagement across the sector.

In most instances, a healthcare service may choose what model of assessment they undertake, dependent on their level of readiness. Healthcare services commencing accreditation via a desktop assessment model may do so for a maximum of two assessment cycles prior to progressing to a desktop assessment accompanied by a virtual assessment component model.

In the case of healthcare services with facilities and equipment to support physical examinations of, or therapies or procedures upon patients, the use of this model should generally be limited to no more than one assessment cycle. After this time, such a healthcare service will be required to progress to a desktop assessment with an on-site assessment component to enable in person observation and inspection of equipment and facilities.

In circumstances where a healthcare service is required to be accredited to the Standards to satisfy regulatory, contractual or licensing requirements, the relevant regulator must stipulate the model of assessment to be used. In some instances, a regulator may also stipulate the model of assessment to be used is conducted at short notice.

Find out more

For more detailed information about accreditation or implementation of the Standards, visit safetyandquality.gov.au/pchs or contact the Safety and Quality Advice Centre at AdviceCentre@safetyandquality.gov.au or call 1800 304 056.

Table 1: Models of assessment

Model of assessment	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Assessment method	Desktop assessment	Desktop assessment + virtual assessment comprising observations and interviews	On-site visit comprising observations and interviews + optional desktop assessment	Regulator-stipulated short-notice on-site assessment + optional desktop assessment
Accreditation cycle	Two years	Three years	Three years	Three years
Number of cycles at this assessment level	Two assessment cycles*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One assessment cycle for healthcare services involving physical examinations, therapies or procedures upon patients* ■ Otherwise unlimited 	Unlimited	Unlimited
Public recognition	Certificate of Accreditation (Stage 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Certificate of Accreditation (Stage 2) ■ Registered on the Commission's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Certificate of Accreditation (Stage 3) ■ Registered on the Commission's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Certificate of Accreditation (Stage 4) ■ Registered on the Commission's website
Certificate	Issued by the accrediting agency	Issued by the accrediting agency	Issued by the accrediting agency	Issued by the accrediting agency

* Approval for an extension to use a certain model of assessment for more than the specified limit of assessment cycles in any particular case may be granted by the Commission in exceptional circumstances based on criteria that includes a risk assessment, the nature of the healthcare service's participation in the assessment process, its IT capacity, availability of other safety and quality data and evidence feedback on safety and quality performance against national or state-level agreed indicators.

For healthcare services that have undergone assessment previously and are familiar with the process and requirements of accreditation, the desktop assessment component of stages 3 and 4 can be optional.

Attachment 1: Assessment and reporting to the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards

