

Consultation paper

Definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation

Aim

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is consulting on the draft definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation (the definition). We will update the definition so that services delivering quality and comprehensive general practice care can be accredited against the Standards for general practices (5th edition) (the Standards).

Once you have read the background and draft definition below, we invite you to complete our survey or provide feedback to standards@racgp.org.au

[COMPLETE SURVEY](#)

The survey will be open until Sunday 26 March 2023.

Join us for an information session and opportunity for Q&A by registering to attend one of the below sessions.

[Register for information session and Q&A
Tuesday 9 March 2023, 8.00–9.00pm AEDT](#)

[Register for information session and Q&A
Thursday 21 March 2023, 7.30–8.30pm AEDT](#)

Background

For a general practice to be eligible for accreditation against the Standards, it must first be assessed by an independent accreditation agency to meet the [definition of a general practice for the purposes of accreditation](#) (the definition). If a practice meets the definition, it can then be assessed against the mandatory indicators in the Standards.

Following previous consultation with the profession, the RACGP Expert Committee – Standards for General Practices (REC-SGP) agreed that:

- if the practice is delivering quality and comprehensive general practice care then it should be defined as a general practice for the purpose of accreditation
- the application of the definition is especially important for practices with certain demographics who would otherwise often miss out on this type of targeted care
- the definition be changed to consider practices that provide **comprehensive** care irrespective of patient cohort.

The draft definition endorsed by the REC-SGP and RACGP Board, on which we seek your feedback, is provided below.

⚠ The purpose of this update to the definition is to include more genuine general practices currently excluded from accreditation, not to exclude services who are currently accredited by adding limiting parameters.

If you would like additional background information on the Standards and accreditation for general practice, read our [background paper](#).

Draft definition for consultation

The RACGP proposes the below draft definition in **Table 1** that a general practice or health service must meet before seeking accreditation.

Table 1 Draft definition of a general practice for the purpose of accreditation

<p>For a practice or health service to seek accreditation:</p> <p>it must provide comprehensive, patient-centred, whole-person and continuous care; and its services must be predominantly* of a general practice nature.</p> <p>* 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.</p>
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The definition exists to identify services that can be assessed as a general practice by an accreditation agency – it does not confirm accreditation. A practice, once acknowledged as meeting the definition, must still go on to meet all mandatory indicators in the Standards.

The terms used in the draft definition will be defined in the Standards as per **Table 2** below.

Table 2 Draft glossary terms to accompany the updated definition (in the Standards document)

Term	Definition
Comprehensive care/ Comprehensiveness ¹	Comprehensive care is the coordinated delivery of the total health care required or requested by a patient. The scope of clinical practice is challenging, spanning prevention, health promotion, early intervention for those at risk, and the management of acute, chronic and complex conditions within the practice population whether in the home, practice, health service, outreach clinic, hospital or community. Comprehensiveness ensures services are not limited by body system, disease process or service site.
Continuous care / Continuity of care	When a patient experiences a series of discrete healthcare events and/or services that are coherent, connected and consistent with their medical needs and personal circumstances.
Whole-person care ²	Holistic care is reflected in the interplay between bio-psycho-social contributors to health, which leads to a deep understanding of the whole person, and the ability to manage complex conditions and circumstances. A general practitioner (GP) functions as a physician, counsellor, advocate and agent of change for individuals, families and their communities.
Patient centredness	Patient centredness is demonstrated in a general practice team's understanding that health, illness and disease are ultimately personal experiences, and that their principal role is to relieve personal disease in all its forms, in the manner best suited to each individual. The patient's needs, values and desired health outcomes always remain central to the evaluation and management processes of the general practice team.

¹ The edited definition of comprehensiveness removes the limitations placed on comprehensive care (eg age, gender) that currently prevent some models of general practice from seeking accreditation. The first sentence is aligned to the ASCQHC definition of comprehensive care.

² 'Whole person' care is included in the draft definition to reflect aspects of bio-psychosocial determinants of health in general practice care. The definition avoids the term 'holistic' because the term is commonly used to describe alternative therapies