

The RACGP Standards for after-hours services – FAQs

What are the RACGP Standards for after-hours services?

The RACGP *Standards for after-hours services* (Standards for after-hours services) are quality and safety standards that are unique to services providing care in the after-hours period.

To be accredited against the Standards for after-hours services, a service must first meet the RACGP's definition of an after-hours service for the purposes of accreditation:

- the after-hours service accepts appointments and provides patient care only within the after-hours period as defined by Medicare
- after-hours services are non-routine and predominantly of a general practice nature
- except where specifically exempted, the service can meet all the mandatory Indicators in the Core, Quality Improvement and After-Hours Services modules.

Stakeholders can provide feedback on this definition to standards@racgp.org.au by 29 September 2017.

After-hours services who do not meet the RACGP definition above are unable to be formally accredited against the Standards. These services can still use the Standards as a template for quality improvement and risk and can conduct a self-assessment against the Criterion and related Indicators in the Standards.

Once services have met the definition, they must then meet the requirements of the following modules:

- Core
- Quality Improvement
- After-Hours Services.

Together, the three modules will form the RACGP *Standards for after-hours services*.

Why develop the RACGP Standards for after-hours services?

RACGP and the accreditation agencies have received feedback from after-hours services providers on the difficulties they experience in meeting the requirements of the 4th edition Standards. The modular format of the 5th edition Standards has enabled the RACGP to develop the Standards for after-hours services. These draft Standards are intended to be more relevant to services providing after-hours care.

What is the difference between the requirements for after-hours services in the 4th edition RACGP Standards for general practices and the RACGP Standards for after-hours services?

The 4th edition Standards were written predominantly for general practices despite additional contextual information for 'services providing care outside normal opening hours'.

Even with this additional information, some after-hours services had difficulty meeting some of the requirements of the 4th edition Standards.

The Standards for after-hours services recognise the difference between traditional general practices and after-hours services. The After Hours Services module includes specific requirements for those services providing after-hours care.

How have the RACGP Standards for after-hours services been developed?

The 5th edition Standards has been the basis for developing the Standards for after-hours services. The After-Hours Services module contains relevant Criterion, Indicators and explanatory material adapted from the General Practice module in the 5th edition Standards. In addition, the module has been informed by:

- the RACGP position statement on after-hours home visiting services
- the 4th edition Standards
- the Standards for Medical Deputising Services – An appendix to the 1996 Entry Standards
- discussion with the RACGP Expert Committee – Standards for General Practices
- relevant literature
- consultation feedback
- findings from testing of the 5th edition Standards.

Who will be able to use the RACGP Standards for after-hours services?

Type of service	Type of operations	Modules applicable for accreditation
An after-hours service providing after-hours care within a physical facility and provides home or other visits.	This service will have a physical facility that only operates in the after-hours period and may provide home and other visits.	If the service meets the RACGP definition for after-hours services, then this service would be eligible to be accredited under Core, QI and the After-Hours Services modules.
An after-hours service only providing home or other visits.	This service has a physical operations facility to undertake administrative functions, triage patients by phone and store medical supplies. The service only provides home and other visits.	If the service meets the RACGP definition for after-hours services, then this service would be eligible to be accredited under Core, QI and the After-Hours Services modules. However, some Indicators will not be applicable – these are clearly marked in the After-Hours Services module.
Other models such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-located services services managed by regional primary care healthcare organisations or state services. 	Co-located services are clinics that provide after-hours primary healthcare and are located within a public hospital, near or adjacent to its emergency department (ED).	If the service meets the RACGP definition for after-hours services, then this service would be eligible to be accredited under Core, QI and the After-Hours Services modules.

Can an after-hours services still be accredited against the 4th edition RACGP Standards for general practices?

The 4th edition Standards can be used by a general practice or health service that meet the RACGP definition of a general practice until November 2018.

Where can I get more information?

All information on the development of the Standards for after-hours services is available at www.racgp.org.au/standardsdevelopment