Application for RACGP approval of a practice-specific methodology for collecting patient feedback

Information for practices

Background

The RACGP *Standards for general practices* (4th edition) (the Standards) require practices seeking accreditation to collect feedback about patients' experiences of their practice for the purpose of initiating quality improvements (see Criterion 2.1.2).

As outlined in the RACGP *Patient feedback guide: Learning from our patients* (updated August 2014) (the Guide), practices can either collect patient feedback using a commercially available, RACGP approved validated patient experience questionnaire or develop a practice-specific method.

A practice-specific method being proposed by a general practice working to comply with Criterion 2.1.2 of the Standards, will require prior approval by the RACGP to ensure the method satisfies the requirements outlined in the Guide.

Who should use this application form?

This application form is applicable to an individual general practice which has developed a practice-specific patient feedback method for exclusive use by the practice and any branch practices[1].

Applications must be submitted **after** the initial development, pre-testing and refinement of the practice specific method, but **prior** to formally collecting information from patients.

This application form is not applicable to individuals and organisations that have developed and validated a patient experience questionnaire for use by general practices in the wider Australian general practice setting – a separate application form should be used for RACGP approval of such questionnaires.

Requirements for practice-specific methods

Where a practice seeks to use their own practice-specific method for collecting feedback on patients' experiences of their practice, the methods must comply with the requirements outlined in the Guide, available on the RACGP website: **www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/resources/patient-feedback**

Essential pre-reading

In considering applications, the RACGP will assume that applicants have read and understood the Standards and the Guide.

Practices are also encouraged to utilise the RACGP *Toolkit for developing practice-specific questionnaires* if developing a questionnaire for approval by the RACGP.

Applications

Please complete the application form using only the spaces provided – text which runs outside these spaces will not be visible in printed copies of your application form.

Applications will be reviewed by the RACGP Standards Unit and the Patient Feedback Advisory Committee (PFAC).

Applications will be evaluated on a case by case basis against the requirements specified in the Guide.

The RACGP will treat all applications in confidence and will not circulate application documentation outside the PFAC.

1. Practice branches providing less than 3000 services per annum do not need to be accredited in their own right to be eligible to participate in the Medicare Practice Incentives Program.

Application fee

An application fee of $150 will be payable by invoice once the application has been received.

Conditions of approval

The PFAC approves the method for a practice-specific collection of patient feedback on behalf of the RACGP. Approval shall be provided in writing and shall apply for a specific patient feedback method in its entirety for use by the individual practice while the Standards are current. Approval is not transferable to other practice-specific methods or other practices (other than branch practices) unless specified in advance by the RACGP.

How to lodge you application

Applications should be submitted electronically to **standards@racgp.org.au**

Further information

For further information please refer to the Guide.

Applicants may also contact the RACGP directly for information or advice:

email **standards@racgp.org.au**

Application checklist: required documentation

Questionnaires: for practices applying for approval of practice-specific questionnaires

Please make sure all required documentation is submitted:

- [ ] A completed application form
- [ ] A copy of the information sheet/s that will be provided to patients
- [ ] A copy of a practice-specific questionnaire which has been pre-tested
- [ ] A copy of the staff instructions for administering a practice-specific questionnaire
- [ ] A template report (or sample report) to demonstrate how patient experience data will be summarised in a format that enables the practice to identify areas for quality improvement.

Focus groups or interviews: for practices applying for approval of focus groups and interviews

Please make sure all required documentation is submitted:

- [ ] A completed application form
- [ ] A copy of the information sheet/s that will be provided to patients
- [ ] A copy of patient focus group or interview questions
- [ ] A template report (or sample report) to demonstrate how patient experience data will be summarised in a format that enables the practice to identify areas for quality improvement.

RACGP | *Application form*

1. Applicant details

Name of contact person

Name of practice and any branch practices at which this tool will be used

Address

City

State

Postcode

Telephone

Mobile

Fax number

Email

Anticipated date of accreditation survey

Anticipated date range when data collection using the proposed tool, will commence

2. Your practice

Please provide a description of the key features of your practice i.e. the common demographic characteristics of the patient population, location, number of clinicians, and specialised services. This information will give the RACGP important context when reviewing your application.

What methodology is proposed?

Questionnaire	☐	complete sections 1, 2, 3
Focus groups	☐	complete sections 1, 2, 4
Patient interviews	☐	complete sections 1, 2, 5

3. Practice-specific questionnaire

If your practice intends to use a questionnaire that you have developed to collect patient feedback, you must complete section 3 including the applicant self-assessment checklists.

Please indicate whether the RACGP *Toolkit for developing practice-specific questionnaires* (the Toolkit) was used to develop the questionnaire:

☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, please tick which statement applies:

☐ The questionnaire was prepared using only the sample questions provided in the Toolkit

☐ The questionnaire was prepared using both sample questions and questions developed by the practice

☐ The questionnaire used only questions developed by the practice

3.1 Questionnaire content

In your responses to questions 3.1.1 to 3.1.9 below, describe how your questionnaire covers the quality domains and the core patient demographics outlined in the Guide. Please indicate which questions, if any, are sample questions from the Toolkit, and provide the question number within the questionnaire and the question.

3.1.1 Demographic data

Core patient demographics	**Toolkit sample question used? (Y/N)**	**Question number**	**Question**
Age			
Gender			
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status			
Language spoken at home or country of birth			
Education			
Healthcare card status			
Frequency of visits to the practice			

For each additional demographic question proposed, provide:
i. The question number
ii. The question
iii. A brief explanation of the purpose (max 100 words)

3.1.2 Access and availability

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the access and availability quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.3 Information provision

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the information provision quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.4 Privacy and confidentiality

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the privacy and confidentiality quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.5 Continuity of care

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the continuity of care quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.6 Communication skills of clinical staff

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the communication skills quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.7 Interpersonal skills of clinical staff

Please note, if using the Toolkit, also include questions covering the interpersonal skills of reception staff.

Toolkit sample question (Y/N)	Question number	Question/Statement

Describe how these questions adequately cover the interpersonal skills quality domain (250 words max)

3.1.8 Invitation to make open ended comments

At least one open ended question must be included in the questionnaire. Please provide:
i. The question number/s
ii. The question/s
iii. A brief explanation of the purpose (Not applicable if using the open ended sample question in the Toolkit)

3.1.9 Other questions (if applicable in your proposed questionnaire)

- You may also design questions that address issues specific to your practice (outside of the required domains).
- If using the Toolkit, include questions chosen under 'experience over last year'.

Please provide:
i. The question number/s
ii. The question/s
iii. A brief explanation of the purpose

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.1

☐ Questions to address each of the core patient demographics outlined in the Guide have been included
☐ Questions to adequately address each quality domains outlined in the Guide have been included
☐ The questionnaire allows patients to answer with the appropriate responses i.e.) a five point Likert scale
☐ The questions are short, simple and clear
☐ Each question asks one question at a time (no double barrelled questions)
☐ The ordering of questions has been considered
☐ The questionnaire is appropriately formatted and laid out

3.2 Appropriateness of your questionnaire

Describe how your questionnaire is appropriate for your practice's particular patient population

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.2

☐ The questions are relevant to your practice
☐ The questions are appropriate for the language and culture of your practice's patient population

3.3 Pre-testing the questionnaire

Pre-testing the questionnaire before you formally commence data collection gives you an opportunity to ensure you and your patients have a common understanding of the questions, and it will accurately measure patients' experiences of your practice in a consistent way. Please provide the following information:

The number of patients recruited to conduct the pre-test	
The number of completed questionnaires collected	
Describe what steps you took to pre-test your questionnaire	
Describe any issues identified when conducting the pre-test i.e. in the selection of patients, receiving incomplete questionnaires, errors in data entry etc	
Describe any changes that were made to the questionnaire and/or operational procedures as a result of any issues that arose	

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.3

- [ ] The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small representative number of patients
- [ ] Any issues with the questionnaire were identified
- [ ] Any issues with the administration/operational procedures of the questionnaire were identified
- [ ] The questionnaire and/or operational procedures were revised to address any issues identified
- [ ] If revisions were made, the questionnaire was pre-tested again.

3.4 Administration of the questionnaire

3.4.1 Patient information sheet

The patient information sheet must explain:

i. The purpose of the questionnaire
ii. Instructions for completing and returning the questionnaire
iii. That the decision to complete or not complete the questionnaire will not affect care received from the practice, and the questionnaire is anonymous and confidential.

Please include a copy of the patient information sheet/s with your application.

3.4.2 Instructions for staff administering the questionnaire

Describe in detail how practice staff will be instructed to administer the questionnaire.

Please also include a copy of the instructions provided to staff to administer the questionnaire.

3.4.3 Time to complete the questionnaire

Please indicate the average length of time required for patients to complete the questionnaire as determined from pre-testing.

3.4.4 Patient selection

Explain how you will select patients to complete the questionnaire and to avoid sampling bias.

Data integrity relates to:

- having patients complete all questions; and
- entering the data into a computer file for analysis avoiding data entry error.

3.4.5 Data integrity

Describe how the method of survey administration protects data integrity:

3.4.6 Patient confidentiality

Describe how the method of survey administration protects patient confidentiality.

3.4.7 Data security

Describe how you will maintain the security of your completed questionnaires and survey data.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.4

- [ ] A representative sample of the practice's patient population will be surveyed
- [ ] At least 30 completed questionnaires per full time equivalent GP in the practice will be collected
- [ ] Administration of the questionnaire protects data integrity and patient confidentiality.

3.5 Data analysis

Describe how the information from the completed questionnaires will be collated and analysed including any statistical methods for analysis of quantitative data and analysis of qualitative data. Your description should include the way demographic data will be used to help your practice differentiate patient experiences.

Who will conduct the analysis? What training/experience does this person have in qualitative/quantitative data analysis?

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.5

☐ Data is analysed using standard descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and range) at a minimum

3.6 Data reporting

The purpose of collecting feedback from your patients is to obtain meaningful data that can be used to drive quality improvement initiatives at the practice. That means data needs to be analysed and reported in a manner that readily highlights areas for improvement.

Please provide a template of the report your practice will generate.

How will you identify areas for improvement from the report and how do you plan to communicate the results with the practice team?

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 3.6

The report will:

- [ ] Provide a summary of demographic data
- [ ] Include responses to individual questions in an easy to understand format
- [ ] Group responses in their larger domains
- [ ] Present the responses to the open-ended questions
- [ ] Include a response as to what the results mean for the practice

This is the last question for applications involving a practice-specific questionnaire.

4. Focus groups

If your practice intends to use focus groups to collect patient feedback, you must complete section 4 including the applicant self-assessment checklists.

4.1 Focus group questions

In your responses to questions 4.1.1 to 4.1.7 below, describe how your proposed set of focus group questions covers the following quality domains as outlined in the Guide.

Please include a copy of your proposed focus group questions with your application.

4.1.1 Patient demographics

How will patient demographic data be collected?

Core patient demographics	Question
Age	
Gender	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status	
Language spoken at home or country of birth	
Education	
Healthcare card status	
Frequency of visits to the practice	

For each additional demographic question proposed, provide:
i. The question
ii. A brief explanation of the purpose (max 100 words)

4.1.2 Access and availability

4.1.3 Information provision to patients

4.1.4 Privacy and confidentiality

4.1.5 Continuity of care

4.1.6 Communication skills of clinical staff

4.1.7 Interpersonal skills of clinical staff

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 4.1

- [ ] The core patient demographic data will be collected
- [ ] Broad focus group questions which cover the quality domains have been developed

4.2 Quality of questions

Explain how the focus group questions were developed and how you can be confident the questions will allow for a high quality focus group discussion to occur.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 4.2

- [ ] The questions are relevant to the practice
- [ ] The questions are appropriate for the language and culture of patients who will be in the focus group

4.3 Focus group protocols

In your responses to questions 4.3.2 to 4.3.6 below, describe how your proposed focus group method complies with the requirements outlined in the Guide.

4.3.1 Patient information sheet

The information sheet for patients must explain:

i. The purpose of the focus group,

ii. What is involved in participating in a focus group

iii. That the decision to participate or not participate in the focus group will not affect the care received from the practice

Please include a copy of the patient information sheet with your application.

4.3.2 Focus group features

Describe how the features of your focus groups comply with the requirements outlined in the Guide:

Where and when focus groups will be held	
Number of focus groups	
Duration of each focus group	
Number of participants in each focus group	
Respects patient confidentiality	

4.3.3 Patient selection

Describe how patients will be identified and invited to participate in the focus groups, including the shared characteristics of focus group patients.

4.3.4 Recording focus group discussions

Describe how focus group discussions will be recorded. For example, describe how an audio or video recording will be made with patients' permission and then converted to a written transcript. Alternatively, describe how an independent note taker will record focus group discussions. Indicate how patient confidentiality will be respected in the focus group protocols.

Provide details of the relevant experience and expertise of the note taker and confirm they are not a member of your practice team.

4.3.5 Focus group moderator

Describe the relevant experience and expertise of the person who will conduct the focus groups and confirm that the moderator is not a member of your practice team who provides clinical care to patients. Ideally, the moderator will be completely independent of the practice.

4.3.6 Data security

Describe how you will maintain the security of your focus group data, including recordings, notations and transcripts.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 4.3

- ☐ At least two focus groups will be conducted
- ☐ The focus group will be conducted in a suitable location that is quiet, allows privacy and where patients will not be unduly influenced by the practice
- ☐ Each focus group will have between five and 10 patients participating
- ☐ Each focus group will include patients who share a characteristic
- ☐ Each focus group will be either audio recorded or video recorded (with the permission of those attending the focus group), or detailed notes will be recorded on the conversation
- ☐ The moderator will not facilitate the discussion and take notes at the same time
- ☐ Each focus group will be conducted in a way that protects data integrity and respects patient confidentiality
- ☐ Practice staff will not moderate, note take or be present during the focus group. Exceptions may be made in special circumstances for administrative staff.

4.4 Data analysis

Describe how the data from the interviews will be analysed.

Who will conduct the analysis? What training/experience does this person have in qualitative data analysis (and quantitative data analysis if required)?

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 4.4

- [ ] The results of each focus group will be written in a way that factually records the discussion
- [ ] Identifiable details of patients, such as names, will be removed from the report
- [ ] The results of the focus groups will be analysed in terms of the key themes, topics or ideas that were raised for each of the broad categories of patient experience and a report will be prepared for the practice.

4.5 Data reporting

The purpose of collecting feedback from your patients is to obtain meaningful data that can be used to drive quality improvement initiatives. That means data needs to be analysed and reported in a manner that readily highlights areas for improvement.

Please provide a template of the report your practice will generate.

How will you identify areas for improvement from the report? How do you plan to communicate the results with the practice team?

This is the last question for applications involving practice-specific focus groups.

5. Interviews

If your practice intends to use interviews to collect patient feedback, you must complete section 5 including the applicant self-assessment checklists.

5.1 Interview questions

In your responses to questions 5.1.1 to 5.1.6 below, describe how your proposed set of interview questions covers the quality domains as outlined in the Guide.

Please include a copy of the interview questions with your application.

5.1.1 Patient demographics

How will patient demographic data be collected?

Core patient demographics	Question
Age	
Gender	
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status	
Language spoken at home or country of birth	
Education	
Healthcare card status	
Frequency of visits to the practice	

For each additional demographic question proposed, provide:
i. The question
ii. A brief explanation of the purpose (max 100 words)

5.1.2 Access and availability

5.1.3 Information provision to patients

5.1.4 Privacy and confidentiality

5.1.5 Continuity of care

5.1.6 Communication skills of clinical staff

5.1.7 Interpersonal skills of clinical staff

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 5.1

- [ ] The core patient demographic data will be collected
- [ ] Broad interview questions which cover the quality domains have been developed

5.2 Quality of questions

Explain how the patient interview questions were developed and how you can be confident the questions will allow for high quality interviews to occur.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 5.2

- [ ] The questions are relevant to the practice
- [ ] The questions are appropriate for the language and culture of patients in the interview

5.3 Interview protocols

5.3.1 Patient information sheet

The information sheet for patients must explain:
i. The purpose of the interviews
ii. What is involved in participating in an interview
iii. The decision to participate or not participate in an interview run by the practice will not affect the care received from the practice.

Please include a copy of the patient information sheet with your application.

5.3.2 Interview features

Describe how the features of your interviews comply with the requirements outlined in the Guide:

Where and when interviews will be conducted	
Number of interviews	
Duration of interviews	
Respects patient confidentiality	

5.3.3 Patient selection

Describe how patients will be identified and invited to participate in an interview.

5.3.4 Recording interviews

Describe how interviews will be recorded. For example, describe how an audio or video recording will be made with the patient's permission and then converted to a written transcript. Alternatively, describe how a note taker will record interviews. Indicate how patient confidentiality will be respected in the interview protocols.

Provide details of the relevant experience and expertise of the note taker and confirm they are not a member of your practice team.

5.3.5 Interviewer

Describe the relevant experience and expertise of the person who will conduct the interviews and confirm that the interviewer is not a member of your practice team who provides clinical care to patients. Ideally, the interviewer will be completely independent of the practice.

5.3.6 Data security

Describe how you will maintain the security of your interview data including recordings, notations and transcripts.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 5.3

- [ ] At least five interviews will be conducted per FTE GP in your practice
- [ ] Each interview will be either audio recorded or video recorded (with the patient's permission), or detailed notes taken on the conversation
- [ ] Each interview will be conducted in a way that protects data integrity and respects patient confidentiality
- [ ] The interview will be conducted by someone experienced in interviewing
- [ ] Practice staff will not be present during the interview. Exceptions may be made in special circumstances for administrative staff
- [ ] The results of each interview will be written in a way that factually records the discussion

5.4 Data analysis

Describe how the data from the interviews will be analysed.

Who will conduct the analysis? What training/experience does this person have in qualitative data analysis (quantitative data analysis if required)? Confirm this person is not a member of your practice team who provides clinical care to patients.

Applicant self-assessment checklist: 5.4

- [ ] Identifiable details of patients, such as names, will be removed from the report
- [ ] The results of the interviews will be analysed in terms of the key themes, topics or ideas that are raised for each of the broad categories of patient experience, and a report will be prepared for the practice

5.5 Data reporting

The purpose of collecting feedback from your patients is to obtain meaningful data that can be used to drive quality improvement initiatives. That means data needs to be analysed and reported in a manner that readily highlights areas for improvement.

Please provide a template of the report your practice will generate.

How will you identify areas for improvement from the report? How do you plan to communicate the results with the practice team?

This is the last question for applications involving practice-specific interviews.