

RACGP Standards for general practices (5th edition) factsheet

Definition of a clinical team for the purposes of accreditation

What the Standards say

The RACGP Standards for general practices (5th edition) (the Standards) defines clinical teams and members as:

Clinical team	All members of the practice team who have health qualifications that qualify them to perform clinical functions
Clinical team member	An individual member of the practice team who has health qualifications that qualify them to perform clinical functions
Practice team	All people who work or provide care within the practice (eg GPs, receptionists, practice managers, nurses, allied health professionals)

Relevant Indicators

The definition of a clinical team relates to **Criterion GP3.1 - Qualifications, education and training of healthcare practitioners**. Indicator GP3.1▶A requires members of the clinical team to:

- have current national registration where applicable
- have accreditation/certification with their relevant professional association
- actively participate in continuing professional development (CPD) relevant to their position and in accordance with their legal and professional organisation's requirements

- have undertaken training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), in accordance with the recommendations of their professional organisation or at least every three years.

In addition to Criterion GP3.1, the definition of a clinical team may have broader implications for assessing systems and processes such as:

- immunisation status (C3.5▶A)
- access to relevant clinical guidelines (C5.1▶A)
- supporting consistent diagnosis and management of patients (C5.1▶B)
- exercise of autonomy (C5.2▶A)
- prescribing patterns (Q12.2▶C)
- referrals (GP2.3▶B).

Including co-located practitioners as a part of the clinical team

Some practices will rent available space within their practice to an independent contractor. However, it is appropriate to include these co-located practitioners (who are not employed by a practice) as a member of the clinical team given:

- practitioners, particularly independent contractors, are performing a clinical function under the banner of a practice and therefore the practice is responsible for their operation within a framework of quality and safety

- consumers assume services provided by these practitioners are included within the scope of accreditation
- medical/health practitioners may share practice infrastructure regardless of their contractual/employment or lease arrangements
- this approach recognises that there are diverse models for operating a general practice.

Examples

Some examples of where a co-located practitioner is considered a member of the clinical team include when the practitioner:

- share practices resources/spaces (eg they access a shared consultation room or height adjustable bed)
- share practice staff (eg they use the same receptionist as other members of the clinical team)
- share access to medical records (eg patients assume the co-located practitioner can access their information because they are located on site)
- participates in practice activities (eg they attend team meetings or contribute to patient information sessions)
- is otherwise seen by patients as part of the clinical team (eg they are included on the practice website or other public listings)

Method of determining the clinical team

The RACGP cannot determine an individual practitioner's status as a member of a clinical team. Accreditation agency surveyors are positioned to make this determination based on their observations and to support practices to meet all indicators as best they can.

Accreditation agencies will determine whether a practitioner is part of the clinical team based on whether the practitioner:

1. has access to the medical records system
2. is included on the website and practice team information (eg brochures, practice directory)
3. attends practice team meetings.

The accreditation agency can determine if the practitioner is part of the clinical team based on the above factors. If there are any remaining doubts, the practitioner's inclusion in the clinical team would be determined based on whether they can access the practice's patient records.

The Standards do not discriminate between the employment/contractual relationships of individuals working at a practice and the practice itself. The intent of the Standards is to look at the systems and processes in relation to patient safety, care provision and quality service.

Further information

Contact standards@racgp.org.au for further information.