



Frequently Asked Questions

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a proven process for the external evaluation and ongoing quality improvement of health care services. Accreditation is undertaken by practices to assure the delivery of safe, high quality health care. Accreditation is centered on a set of formal standards developed by the profession. It is a tool to measure and improve practice performance and to improve outcomes. It also provides a basis for minimum standards of client safety and care – essential in the health care industry.

What are the benefits of accreditation?

Accreditation demonstrates to your clients and the wider community that you are committed to providing safe, high quality health care.

Accreditation also:

- provides your practice with a sound business framework,
- establishes processes and procedures to improve efficiency,
- helps reduce risk, and
- differentiates your practice from competitors.

Who is QIP?

Quality in Practice Pty Ltd (QIP) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL).

AGPAL has provided accreditation services to general practices since 1998. QIP and AGPAL are recognised as the market leaders in primary health care accreditation in Australia. QIP also provides accreditation services to optometry and medical imaging practices.

Who sets the accreditation standards?

The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) is the author and owner of the physiotherapy standards. The standards are maintained and revised by the APA. QIP has been exclusively appointed by the APA to manage the accreditation of physiotherapy practices in Australia.

How long does accreditation last?

Accreditation for physiotherapy practices is a three year cycle.

What is involved in the accreditation process?

1. Register the practice with QIP for accreditation against the APA standards.
2. Work through the practice self assessment process using

- AccreditationPro with ongoing support and resources from QIP.
3. The practice electronically submits their self assessment to QIP.
4. The practice is visited by an independent peer physiotherapist who has been trained as a surveyor. The surveyor interviews practice staff, reviews client health records and observes the practice in operation.
5. After the visit to the practice, the surveyor submits their report to QIP.
6. QIP develops the accreditation report which provides detailed feedback on the practice's performance against the APA standards and recommendations for quality improvement.
7. If all standards are met, the practice is granted full accreditation for a three year term.
8. If a standard is not met, the practice is granted conditional accreditation and given time and support to make any recommended improvements.
9. Upon full accreditation, the practice receives an accreditation certificate and is encouraged to promote their accredited status to their clients and the community.
10. Practice continues quality improvements and maintains compliance with the APA standards supported by ongoing access to QIP resources and expertise.

How long will it take to achieve accreditation?

QIP recommends practices plan in advance for accreditation and allow a few hours each week spread over 12 months to gradually complete the process. The first phase of accreditation is self assessment. We advise practices to allocate a few hours each week for up to eight months to complete this phase. Phase two is peer assessment when a surveyor will visit your practice – please allow a two month window.

The final phase is reporting and certification by QIP where we allow up to three months. Naturally, many practices achieve accreditation in less than 12 months, but we recommend practices allow plenty of time.

What happens if my practice doesn't meet the standards?

Accreditation is not about passing or failing. It's an educative process. It's about supporting practices and helping them to make changes to ensure they achieve better quality outcomes. QIP aims to engage with physiotherapy practices in an ongoing process of quality improvement.

If a practice is assessed to not meet a standard, then QIP will make recommendations and work with the practice to support them while making any recommended improvements. QIP understands each practice is different and can be assured they will receive the support they need while undergoing accreditation.

Who surveys my practice?

Accreditation with QIP is a process based on peer review. QIP surveyors are experienced, qualified and independent professional physiotherapy colleagues. They understand the practice of physiotherapy and its unique elements and challenges.

How long will the accreditation visit take?

In most cases an accreditation visit will take around four hours. We recommend you nominate your accreditation visit to occur at a time outside your practice's busiest operating hours. However, your practice must be operating during the accreditation visit so the surveyor can observe your practice interacting with clients.

How much will accreditation cost my practice?

The fee for practice accreditation is based on the total number of hours worked per week by all the clinical staff in your practice. The APA has defined 36 hours per week as the equivalent of one full time clinical staff member, or one EFT. So, for example, if your practice employs five clinical staff who together work a total of 133 hours per week, your practice will have an EFT of 3.7.

The fee for practice accreditation is \$695 per EFT (including GST). This fee is paid at the completion of your practice self assessment, before your practice accreditation visit and provides full payment for three years accreditation.

New practices joining the QIP accreditation program for the first time pay a registration fee before they start working on their self assessment. The registration fee is a flat fee of \$550 per practice (inclusive of GST).

When new practices complete their self assessment within nine months of registering with QIP, the registration fee is deducted from their accreditation fee.

What is AccreditationPro?

AccreditationPro is a computer based self assessment system designed to support and guide primary health care practices through accreditation. It automates the previous manual process of self assessment, saving time and reducing paperwork.

AccreditationPro features an action plan and summary function which acts as a framework to help practices identify areas for improvement, make changes and monitor progress. QIP provides experienced and friendly support, comprehensive technical assistance and a step by step tutorial to help first time users of AccreditationPro.

What platform do I need to support AccreditationPro?

To use AccreditationPro your practice will need a modern browser that has javascript enabled. Recommended browsers include Internet Explorer 6 SP1 or higher, Mozilla Firefox 1.5.0.6 or higher and Opera 9.0.1 or higher.