

The NSQHS Standards Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the NSQHS Standards?

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards provide a nationally consistent statement of the level of care consumers should be able to expect from health services. The NSQHS Standards drive the implementation and use of safety and quality systems and improve the quality of health service provision in Australia. The 10 standards are:

- Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations
- Partnering with Consumers
- Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections
- Medication Safety
- Patient Identification and Procedure Matching
- Clinical Handover
- Blood and Blood Products
- Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries
- Recognising and Responding to Clinical Deterioration in Acute Health Care
- Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls

The standards were endorsed by Australian Health Ministers in September 2011 and are scheduled to be reviewed by 2017.

2. How were the Standards developed and decided upon?

Since its establishment in 2006, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has been working on reforms for the accreditation system, including a national set of standards to improve safety and quality outcomes for patients.

The development of the 10 NSQHS Standards was based on broad consultation and collaboration with jurisdictions, technical experts and a wide range of stakeholders, including health professionals and consumers. The NSQHS Standards were selected because they address areas where:

- The impact is on a large number of patients
- There is a known gap between the current situation and best practice outcomes
- Improvement strategies exist that are evidence-based and achievable.

3. What are core and developmental actions?

The Standards apply to a wide variety of health service organisations. Because of the variable size, structure and complexity of Australian health care organisations a degree of flexibility is required in the application of the Standards.

Core actions are critical for safety and quality. All core actions must be met before a health service organisation can be accredited to the NSQHS Standards.

Developmental actions do not need to be fully met in order to achieve accreditation, although health service organisations need to demonstrate activity in these areas. Developmental actions are in areas where health service organisations should focus their future efforts and resources to improve patient safety and quality.

100% of core actions are to be met in order to achieve accreditation to the NSQHS Standards.

4. What is an agreed clinical guideline?

Agreed clinical guidelines are evidence-based guides to clinical practice that the executive level of governance in a health service organisation has endorsed for use in that organisation. These guidelines can be generated at a national, state or local level and should meet the criteria for assessing evidence as defined on [the NHMRC clinical practice guidelines portal](#), specifically:

“Corroborating documentation can be produced that a systematic literature search and review of existing scientific evidence published in peer reviewed journals was performed during the guideline development. A guideline is not excluded if corroborating documentation can be produced detailing specific gaps in scientific evidence for some of the guideline’s recommendations.”