

Accreditation

Accreditation is public recognition by a health care accreditation body of the achievement of accreditation standards by a health care organisation, demonstrated through an independent external peer assessment of that organisation's level of performance in relation to the standards.

Accreditation systems are considered to comprise five key elements:

1. Governance or stewardship function
2. A standards-setting process
3. A process of external evaluation of compliance against those standards
4. A remediation or improvement process following the review
5. Promotion of continuous quality improvement.

A national set of Safety and Quality in Health Care Standards (NSQHS) has been developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

The primary aims of the *NSQHS Standards* are to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of care provided by health service organisations. These Standards provide a quality assurance mechanism that tests whether relevant systems are in place to ensure minimum standards of safety and quality are met. It is a quality improvement mechanism that allows health service organisations to realise developmental goals.

ACHS is an independent body that promotes quality and safety principles through an accreditation program – the 'Evaluation, Quality Improvement Program' – (EQulP).

It includes 10 clinical care standards and 5 Corporate standards:

1. Governance for Safety and quality in Health Service Organisations
2. Partnering with Consumers
3. Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections
4. Medication Safety
5. Patient Identification and Procedure Matching
6. Clinical Handover
7. Blood and Blood Products
8. Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries
9. Recognising and Responding to Clinical Deterioration in Acute Health Care
10. Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls.

These standards evaluate key quality and safety principles that relate to:

1. A consumer focus in care provision is demonstrated by:
 - Understanding the needs and expectation of present and potential consumers / patients
 - Ensuring consumers / patients are the priority
 - Evaluating the service from the consumer / patient perspective
2. Effective leadership demonstrates responsibility and commitment to excellence in care provision, quality improvement and performance by:

- Providing direction for the organisation / health service
 - Pursuing the ongoing, development of strategies, systems and methods for achieving excellence
 - Inspiring and motivating the workforce and encouraging employees to contribute, develop and learn
 - Considering proposals that are innovative and creative
3. Continuous improvement - management and staff demonstrate how they continually strive to improve the quality of care. Continuous improvement assists the organisation / health service through:
- Looking for ways to improve as an essential of everyday practice
 - Consistently achieving and maintaining quality care that meets consumer / patient needs
 - Monitoring outcomes in consumer / patient care and seeking opportunities to improve both the care and its results.
4. Evidence of outcomes - organisations depend on the measurement and analysis of performance. Indicators of good care processes or, wherever possible, outcomes of care, demonstrate a commitment to maintaining quality and striving for ongoing improvement by:
- Providing critical data and information about key processes, outputs and results
 - Reflecting those factors that lead to improved health and/or quality of life for consumers / patients or to better operational performance.
5. Striving for best practice - the organisation compares its performance with, or learns from, others and applies best-practice principles. Organisations might demonstrate their efforts through:
- Discovering new techniques and technologies, and using them to achieve world-class performance
 - Learning from others to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of processes
 - Improving consumer / patient satisfaction and outcomes.

The ACHS Accreditation Program consists of a 4-phase cycle conducted over 4 years:

Self Assessment

Periodic Review

Self Assessment

Organisation wide Assessment

Concord Hospital has received consecutive years of accreditation from the Australian Council on Health Care Standards (ACHS) and consecutive Accreditation Awards from the Postgraduate Medical Council of NSW for the exemplary training of postgraduate doctors.