

FACT SHEET
for accrediting agencies
and general practices

Using PICM at assessment and for quality improvement

What is PICM?

PICM is a mnemonic, it describes a methodology designed to provide structure when assessing compliance with standards. It stands for:

PICM

P	Process
I	Improvement
C	Consumer participation
M	Monitoring

The PICM methodology can be applied to the assessment of a general practice to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) *Standards for general practices* and RACGP *Standards for Point-of-Care Testing*.

Why do you need to know about PICM?

Understanding PICM helps general practices assess their compliance with standards and provides assessors with a structured approach to reviewing a general practice's performance against standards.

By reflecting on, or asking members of the workforce, questions against each of the four elements in PICM, general practices and assessors can identify gaps in compliance and areas for improvement.

How do you use PICM?

For each of the key safety and quality process in a general practice, a series of questions are asked of the people in a general practice.

The four PICM elements help identify strengths and weaknesses of safety and quality systems and where improvement is needed.

Members of the workforce are not expected to know the answers to all questions; however, they would be expected to know the information that is relevant to their role in that process or system.

PICM – Process

When evaluating a safety and quality process, it is important to ensure that members of the workforce:

- Are aware of the process
- Understand the intent of the process
- Know what their role and responsibilities are as well as the roles of others involved
- Know where to find information about the process.

Examples of questions you could ask:

- How does this process work in the general practice?
- Is the process documented? How do you access this information?
- Who is responsible for the different parts of the process?
- How do you know the process is being used?
- Are there places or times when this process is not used? Why?
- Are there specific qualifications required to be able to carry out the process?
- Are you confident the information on this process is up to date and being effective?
- Can I see evidence of practice?

PICM – Improvement

To implement change, it is important for members of the workforce to be aware of, and participate in, quality improvement strategies, and for results and recommendations to be reported. It is important to ensure members of the workforce:

- Identify and prioritise areas for change
- Participate in making changes that are required
- Receive information on updates and changes made to the process
- Participate in evaluating the effectiveness of changes.

Examples of questions you could ask:

- Has the process been reviewed? If so, when?
- How do you determine if changes are needed?
- How would you know if changes were made?
- Who is responsible for making the changes?
- Have the changes been fully implemented?
- How do you know if the changes were effective?

PICM – Consumers

Consumers are partners in their own care and partners in the planning, design, monitoring, and evaluation of general practices. Assessments review how effectively patients, carers, families, and consumers are incorporated and supported in these processes.

Examples of questions you could ask:

- How are consumers informed about or involved in designing, improving, or evaluating the process?
- What feedback do you collect from consumers on the practice?
- How do you inform consumers about changes as a result of their feedback?
- How do you provide consumers with feedback on the practice?

PICM – Monitoring

It is important to monitor performance and compliance with processes to:

- Identify areas of under and high-performance
- Prioritise areas for improvement
- Measure compliance with processes and their effectiveness
- Measure changes over time
- Evaluate the effectiveness of changes that are introduced.

Examples of questions you could ask:

- How and how often is this process monitored? Where is this documented?
- How would you know if the process is not being used or not working?
- Who is responsible for collecting and reviewing data?

Questions?

For more information, please visit the NGPA Scheme [webpage](#) on the Commission's website

You can also email the Commission's Safety and Quality Advice centre at AdviceCentre@safetyandquality.gov.au or call 1800 304 056.

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