

Privacy policy

Practices must have a document that clearly sets out their policies on handling personal information, including health information. This document, commonly called a privacy policy, must be made available to anyone who asks for it.

The privacy policy should outline a number of different topics relating to how information is kept confidential and private at all times, including:

- The practice's contact details;
- What information is collected;
- Why information is collected;
- How the practice maintains the security of information held at the practice;
- The range of people within the practice team, for example GPs, nurses, registrars and students, and allied health professionals, who may have access to patient health records, and the scope of that access;
- The procedures for patients to gain access to their own health information on request;
- The way the practice gains patient consent before disclosing personal health information to third parties;
- The process of providing health information to another medical practice, should a patient request it;
- The use of patient health information for quality assurance, research and professional development;
- The procedures for informing new patients about privacy arrangements;
- The way the practice addresses complaints about privacy related matters; and
- The practice's policy for retaining patient health records.

It is expected that each practice's printed information sheet will include the practice's policy for the management of patient health information, which comes under Criterion 1.2.1 Practice information. It is not essential that these privacy policy points be on the information sheet. Ideally, there should be a separately documented privacy policy that describes, in detail, the points above, and this privacy policy must be available to any patients or visitors who might ask to see it. Practices are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Australian Privacy Principles when drafting documenting privacy policies.