



Stage II – Diagnostic imaging accreditation measures in response to COVID-19 pandemic – Factsheet

Last updated: September 2020

- Stage II measures have been introduced to support diagnostic imaging practices providing Medicare-funded services under the Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme (DIAS) to continue to maintain their accreditation status during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They follow on from the Stage I arrangements which are in place until 30 September 2020.
- These Stage II measures are relevant for the DIAS Accreditors, and diagnostic imaging practices already accredited under the DIAS with an accreditation end date between **1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021**.
- Under these Stage II measures, diagnostic imaging practices who are unable to submit an application for re-accreditation because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be able to seek a 6 months continuation. Practices able to submit an application demonstrating substantial compliance with the standards, may be granted a new cycle of accreditation with conditions.

What are the changes?

The following measures regarding the operation of the DIAS are in place from **1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021**:

- On request to an Accrerator, the proprietor of a diagnostic imaging practice whose current accreditation cycle ceases during the period 1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021 may seek a 6 months continuation. This continuation will commence from the end date of the current accreditation. During the period of the continuation, practices may continue to provide Medicare funded diagnostic imaging services.
This measure is to address circumstances where a practice impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic has limited capacity to apply for re-accreditation because of: redirection of staff responsible for accreditation to the provision of front line services; staff shortages through illness or caring responsibilities; self-isolation; border closures; the cessation of staff employment or redeployment to other essential services; or substantial increases in workload in response to the pandemic.
- Alternatively, diagnostic imaging practices able to apply for re-accreditation against the full suite of accreditation standards that have the majority but not all of the required evidence relating to each standard, may at the discretion of the Accrerator, be granted accreditation with conditions. This is to address the circumstances where some required evidence is temporarily unavailable because it is not accessible or another party responsible for providing the evidence is unable to do so because of the pandemic.

All other diagnostic imaging practices must apply for and obtain accreditation in accordance with the usual requirements of the DIAS. In all circumstances, maintaining compliance with the DIAS standards, particularly the requirements relating to infection prevention and control, is paramount.



All practices are expected to have and maintain an organisation-wide Risk Management Plan specifically to manage and reduce the risks related to the transmission of COVID-19. Resources to assist with the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Risk Management Plan are available on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) [website](#).

Why are the changes being made?

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that patient access to safe, quality Medicare funded diagnostic imaging services is maintained during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This commitment includes the continued operation of the DIAS.

What does this mean for providers?

Diagnostic imaging practices with an accreditation end date between **1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021** that need to renew their accreditation will be supported to continue to provide Medicare funded diagnostic imaging services. Practices should contact their Accreditor to discuss the measures available.

Diagnostic imaging practices that have been granted a 6 months continuation by their Accreditor on request, will be able to provide Medicare funded diagnostic imaging services during the period of the continuation but must apply for and obtain re-accreditation before the end date of the continuation.

Where an Accreditor has granted a diagnostic imaging practice accreditation with conditions after assessing an application for accreditation demonstrating substantial compliance with the standards, the practice will have accreditation for a further four years. When the recovery phase commences, these accredited practices must provide to an Accreditor (in a timeframe specified by the Accreditor) all the evidence that was not available at the time of the application for re-accreditation. Failing to do so, may be grounds for the revocation of the accreditation.

How will these changes affect patients?

These changes will not impact the provision of Medicare funded diagnostic imaging services for patients.

Who was consulted on the changes?

The Department of Health (the Department) consulted the DIAS Advisory Committee (the Committee) and the Accreditors. The Committee provides the Department with assistance and advice on the development of policy under the DIAS to ensure that appropriate quality and safety standards of practice are applied to Medicare funded diagnostic imaging.

How will the changes be monitored and reviewed?

Unless advised otherwise, the option to request a continuation will operate from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. This arrangement will be monitored.

Consistent with the usual notification processes under the DIAS, Accreditors will notify practices, Services Australia and the Department, of the outcome of their decision in relation to a diagnostic imaging practice's accreditation.



Where can I find more information?

More information about these measures, including information about your individual accreditation options during the pandemic, is available from your current Accreditor. You can [find contact details for each of the Accreditors](#) on the Department's website.

Resources to assist with the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Risk Management Plan are available on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) [website](#).

Further [information and advice about the operation of the DIAS](#) can also be found on the Department's website. If you have a query relating to the DIAS, you can email dias@health.gov.au.