

QICSA FACT SHEET NUMBER 13

CQI

CQI & the QIC Program

The Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Standards and Accreditation Program is implemented through a process of continuous quality improvement (CQI). The Health & Community Services Core Module 5th edition (Core Module) is written in outcome form and reflects CQI principles.

This strong CQI focus affects not only what the evidence for meeting the Standards is about, but also the process for collecting the evidence.

What is CQI?

There are a number of different approaches, but most include the following elements. QIC defines CQI as a method of leadership and management, used to assess and improve quality, that:

- defines quality in terms of consumer perceptions of service
- analyses systems – not people or things
- promotes partnerships with internal and external suppliers and stakeholders
- uses accurate data to analyse processes and to measure improvement
- involves staff in systems analysis and improvement
- sets up effective, collaborative meetings
- trains supervisors and managers in leading the improvement process
- engages staff in the improvement process
- incorporates strategic planning at the highest levels of management
- achieves improvement through incremental steps
- links evaluation to planning

About the PDCA Cycle

One framework for considering CQI is the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle. This process is a central feature of evidence collection in the QIC Standards and Accreditation Program.

The PDCA process is cyclical and continuous, so no matter where in the cycle you commence the process, you will need to progress through each of the phases.

Planning

This phase involves developing an idea about how something might be improved. A plan is put together to test whether the idea will lead to an improvement.

Doing

This phase involves implementing the plan. It is a trial of the change.

Checking

This phase involves reflecting in a systematic way on the change, its impact and whether it results in an improvement. This involves gathering and analysing data and other forms of evidence. There is an overlap between doing and checking because evidence is normally gathered while the change is being trialled. Not all changes are improvements. On the basis of checking in a systematic way, the organisation may choose not to proceed with the innovation.

Acting

This phase involves embedding the improvement into the everyday work of the organisation, team or individual staff member. This might be achieved by:

- broadening the change to other parts of the organisation and engaging staff in the rationale for, and nature of, the change
- developing policies and protocols
- restructuring the organisation
- providing staff members with appropriate professional development.

More Information

More information about CQI and the PDCA cycle can be obtained from the Core Module and the Quality Journal. Remember the PDCA cycle is really about a culture of continually looking for ways to improve the quality of your organisation's services and programs and the outcomes for your consumers.