



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on diagnostic imaging accreditation – Factsheet

Last updated: 6 April 2020

- 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.
- Depending on the end date of their current cycle of accreditation, diagnostic imaging practices impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to seek a 6 months continuation, or be granted a new cycle of accreditation with conditions, if able to submit an application demonstrating substantial compliance with the standards.
- These changes are relevant for the DIAS Accreditors, and diagnostic imaging practices already accredited under the DIAS with an accreditation end date on or before 30 September 2020.

What are the changes?

The following measures regarding the operation of the DIAS are in place until **30 September 2020**:

- On request to an Accreditor, the proprietor of a diagnostic imaging practice whose current accreditation cycle ceases on or before 30 September 2020 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 has limited capacity to apply for re-accreditation because of staff shortages through illness, self-isolation, caring responsibilities, 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 Accreditor, 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.

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 up to and including **30 September 2020** 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 up to and including 30 September 2020. This arrangement will be monitored and the period may be extended if necessary.

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.

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.