Introducing the Quality Standard for Imaging—supporting and enabling quality improvement in imaging services

Frequently asked questions

Why are we doing this?
The Quality Standard for Imaging (QSI) sets national quality criteria for imaging services. It is against this standard that services should evaluate their performance and make improvements where needed to meet—and continually improve against—the set criteria. Meeting the standard can be evidenced by accreditation. The former name of the standard was not indicative of its relevance and importance to all services, regardless of their accreditation status, in delivering safe, patient-centred care. The Colleges feel that this new name better reflects the overall ethos and philosophy that underpins the standard.

Is the standard changing?
No. The standard has been renamed as the Quality Standard for Imaging 2019 (QSI 2019). Other than that it has not changed in any way from ISAS Standard v3.0. The standard will continue to be reviewed on a four yearly cycle. The planned publication date for the next revision of the QSI is 2021.

What will be different?
Earlier this year the Colleges surveyed all services about their experience in working to the previous iteration of the standard. We know that many services are under severe constraints, both financially and with workforce shortages of both radiologists and radiographers nationally. We want to provide support to services to meet the standard. The Colleges are developing a range of supporting resources which will help services meet the standard through a staged approach. This can ultimately lead to accreditation. The first three stages are new and intended to make meeting the standard more manageable in these challenging times. Ongoing support for all stages will be available from the Colleges.

Does QSI apply to all four UK countries?
Yes—and to NHS, commercial and not for profit imaging services in any of those countries.

How much will this cost?
There will be no charge for the support made available through the Colleges. UKAS will continue to charge fees for assessment and accreditation.

Will the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme (ISAS) still exist?
Not in name, but the component parts which made up the scheme will continue.

Will this change my present accreditation?
No, your accreditation to the ISAS Standard automatically moves to the QSI from 1 July 2019 and its status will not change. UKAS will reissue all certificates and will republish all schedules to coincide with the launch of the QSI. UKAS will also send copies of the new QSI logo to accredited services at this time.

When will the Colleges’ support become available to us and how do we access it?
Resources have been updated and can be found on the new QSI webpages. Further supporting documentation & training/networking days will be communicated over the coming months as they become available.

We have no interest in accreditation—is this change relevant to us?
Yes - The QSI enables services to develop quality improvement building on their existing evidence base. By working through the Standard you can be assured that all the evidence healthcare regulators require will be easily available within your quality management system and a quality culture is embedded across your service.

Our service has a CQC rating of excellent/good. Why do we need QSI too?
The CQC, and devolved nation equivalents, provide regulation for services via rules and guidance which must be followed as a legal requirement. The QSI considers quality with specific reference to imaging services. Imaging services are obliged to meet their legal obligations via the CQC and other healthcare regulators. In meeting the QSI you will have approval from a professional body that you have met an external standard that exceeds the baseline requirements of regulators and embeds the culture of quality improvement within your team.

What is the role of UKAS with the QSI?
UKAS will continue to work with the Colleges to support services preparing for accreditation. UKAS will assess services that wish to become accredited and to grant accreditation. Accreditation continues to enable demonstration that you have all the systems in place for a competent, safe and effective imaging service.

Do we have to be UKAS accredited?
The QSI process allows your service to build the evidence base for accreditation. UKAS will still undertake assessments for accreditation independently against the QSI. UKAS Accreditation is recommended by NHS England/Improvement and the Care Quality Commission in England and is supported by the statutory healthcare bodies across the UK.
Quality Standard for Imaging

Leadership and management
Patient experience
Facilities, resource and workforce
Clinical
Safety

Resources
College guidelines
Templates
National audit
Events and learning

Implementation resources

Measurement/evaluation tool

Imaging service

Stage 1
Organisational buy-in

Stage 2
Organisational evaluation

Stage 3
Service development

Stage 4
Independent assessment

Stage 5
Accredited

New

BAU

Accredited service

Services supported by colleges and the accredited community through self-assessment and four-yearly re-accreditation