

Presence of a Third Party

The practice will ensure that, if a third party is to be present during a consultation, permission is obtained. A 'third party' is a person(s), other than the GP and the patient, who observes or is involved in a consultation. This might be a family member, undergraduate student, registrar, health professional or general practice nurse.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

2.1.3 *The presence of a third party observing or being involved in clinical care during a consultation occurs only with the prior consent of the patient.*

Assessment methods

- Interview with GPs and practice staff

Practice staff will be able to describe how and when patients are informed of the presence of a third party.

- Document review of written policy

Meeting the standards

A sign should be placed in the reception area to notify patients when the practice has medical students or other health professionals observing the consultations. The practice will ensure that, when a third party is to be present during a consultation, permission is obtained, either verbally or via a signed form from the patient prior to the consultation. A patient should never feel pressured into having a third party involved in his or her clinical care. It is therefore inappropriate to ask permission in the consulting room. Obtaining patients' consent via a signed form is also a valuable risk management strategy.

Best practice:

- Patients are asked, whenever possible, at the time of making an appointment if they agree to having a third party present.
- A sign is placed in the reception area to notify patients when the practice has medical students or other health professionals observing the consultations.
- Consent is obtained by reception staff via a signed form.
- Verbal confirmation of consent is obtained by the GP on entering the consulting room.
- Annotation of consent in the patient's health record.