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| Capability Frameworks |
| Health services factsheet |
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### Capability framework

A capability framework is a set of guidelines developed by the Department of Health (the department) that define the minimum requirements and standards for each campus of a healthcare service.

In Victoria's health system, several capability frameworks exist, each tailored to a specific healthcare domain, for example, Maternity and Newborn, Perioperative, and Palliative care. A Cancer capability framework is also under development.

A Service capability framework:

* describes what needs to be in place to support the complexity of care health services provide
* classifies the scope of clinical services and complexity that can be safely managed by health services against 6 levels
* is cumulative in design, as it sets out the requirements for workforce, infrastructure and equipment, clinical support services and clinical governance building incrementally at each of the six levels
* defines a common language for staff, the community and other health services about a health service’s capability.

Capability frameworks are well established in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.

**A Service Capability framework is not:**

* a clinical guideline: evidence based clinical practice is led by relevant craft groups
* a model of care: such as detailed descriptions of clinical pathways and patient flows
* a competency framework (workforce competency frameworks exist in some clinical areas)
* a substitute for accreditation: existing accreditation and quality standards are still binding.

**A Service Capability framework does not include:**

* workforce ratios (these are legislated and determined by site-based funding)
* commonwealth funded services (including primary care).

### Capability framework purpose

Victoria currently has existing service capability frameworks in the areas of Maternity and Newborn care and Palliative care. To ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare services, the development and implementation of additional capability frameworks for other clinical streams are in line with the recommendations of the following reports:

* Targeting Zero:  The Review of Hospital Safety and Quality Assurance in Victoria (2016)
* State-wide Design, Service and Infrastructure Plan for Victoria’s health system 2017–2037 (2017)
* VAGO Clinical Governance: Health Services Audit (2021).

Capability frameworks are tools to:

* ensure the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare services
* enhance transparency between the department and hospitals regarding the clinical services they provide
* empower health services to make informed decisions about the resources and protocols required to manage patient care across the full range of complexity
* support local-level planning and development of healthcare services based on community needs.

### Capability framework scope

Capability frameworks apply to public health service campuses within Victoria’s health system, encompassing a wide range of healthcare providers and facilities.

### Determining capability levels

Every two years, for each capability framework, health services will be required to complete a self-assessment questionnaire via an online platform. For larger health services, each campus will be required to complete the questionnaire. The information collected will be compared with existing data relevant to the clinical stream of the framework.

The department will then collaborate with each health service to confirm the service capability level (at each hospital site where relevant). Once capability levels are agreed, they will be published on the department’s website.

### Monitoring capability levels

As the system steward, the department is responsible for regular performance monitoring of public health services. This process occurs via quarterly scheduled meetings with the CEOs of each health service in the state. A representative from Safer Care Victoria is also in attendance at these meetings.

Once per year these meetings will include an annual capability level review of each relevant clinical stream delivered by the health service. This is an opportunity to have a focused discussion on any changes in service delivery (actual or proposed), a review of existing activity and its alignment with the agreed capability level and any issues that the health service would like to raise with the department regarding the clinical stream. This will be a useful touchpoint to ensure each clinical stream is discussed on an annual basis.

### Ensuring high-quality care

Capability frameworks set minimum standards and requirements to ensure the delivery of high-quality safe patient care.

Each campus will review the scope of their clinical service delivery against the framework and may need to make some adjustments to meet the standards.  These should be discussed and agreed with the department.  In future, if a campus intends to alter the scope of its care provision, the capability framework can provide guidance as to what minimum requirements need to be taken into account.

### Further information

More information about each capability framework is available on the [Department of Health website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-system-design-planning/service-capability-frameworks-for-victoria). These resources will offer detailed insights into the frameworks, their various levels of capability, and how they ensure safe and high-quality care at Victorian hospitals.

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| **Version Control** | | |
| **Version number** | **Author** | **Date approved** |
| 1.0 | Mary Benson | 22 November 2023 |

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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**ISBN** 978-1-76131-455-1

Available at [Service capability frameworks for Victoria](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-system-design-planning/service-capability-frameworks-for-victoria) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-system-design-planning/service-capability-frameworks-for-victoria>