



Quality Standard for Imaging 2021

Contextual guidance document

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Background

The Quality Standard for Imaging (QSI) is jointly owned by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) and the College of Radiographers (CoR). QSI is developed in partnership with imaging professionals, lay and patient representatives and sets out the expectations of both colleges on provision of a quality imaging service.

QSI is a developmental standard and underpins the colleges' vision that all providers of imaging services be invested in a continuous quality improvement journey. QSI allows services to evaluate their performance and develop where needed to continually improve patient experience and outcomes.

QSI and accreditation

QSI 2021 is written to stand alone and services can use it as part of their own internal improvement assessment. However, it has a stronger impact when used as part of a peer review or formal accreditation process.

The [United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#) is the independent assessor appointed by the colleges to evaluate services against QSI and award accreditation to those meeting the standard.

UKAS accreditation of imaging services is a patient-focused peer-to-peer assessment that is designed to give stakeholders, service users, patients and their carers, confidence in their diagnosis and all aspects of their care. UKAS assesses imaging services to ensure that the standard's requirements are maintained through regular monitoring.

QSI and regulation

The Care Quality Commission in England (CQC), Healthcare Inspectorate Scotland (HIS), Healthcare inspectorate Wales (HIW) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in Northern Ireland are the respective regulatory bodies throughout the UK and enforce the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 (IR(ME)R). Employers have a statutory duty to comply with the relevant legislation as part of their work with ionising radiation in the medical field.

The colleges expect that services are meeting their regulatory requirements. Although QSI references the legislative and regulatory requirements of all four nations in the UK, it is not the role or intention of the QSI to confirm regulatory compliance to meet the relevant quality standard.

Whilst QSI is not designed to assess a service's compliance with regulatory requirements, meeting the QSI offers assurance that the service is committed to improving regulatory compliance.

QSI 2021 structure

The QSI has undergone a major restructure, reframing the standards to focus on outcome measures. The colleges are confident that its new focus and user-friendly layout will reduce the burden of inputting evidence requirements for services.

The standards have been categorised into new sections as outline in Table 1. You will notice that the modality-specific standards have been separated out for easier identification.

This new structure also packages together all the information and guidance relevant to each standard in one place. We hope this makes it easier for all members of staff to navigate and increase their understanding and participation in quality improvement.

Each standard is structured as follows:

Reference number (Ref)	This column contains a unique reference number for each quality statement and is used for all cross-referencing.
Quality standard (QS)	<p>Standard name</p> <p>This describes how the quality statement will be known.</p> <p>Quality statement</p> <p>The quality statement describes the service quality required.</p> <p>Outcome measure</p> <p>The outcome measure describes a high-quality achievement of the QS.</p> <p>Indicative inputs</p> <p>The indicative inputs describe what a service should do to achieve the QS.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>The notes give more detail about either the interpretation or the applicability of the quality standard. The notes are prompts designed for the review team, the service and stakeholders.</p>

Any quality standard can be utilised for CPD activities for staff and trainees.

Table 1 – QSI 2021 sections

Reference	Service area	Quality standards
XR-1	Information and support for patients and carers	01. Imaging Service Information
		02. Procedure-specific Information
		03. Contact for Queries, Advice and Aftercare
		04. Respect
		05. Privacy, Dignity and Security
		06. Communication Aids
		07. Environment
		08. General Support for Patients and Carers
		09. Patient, Carer and Service Partnerships
XR-2	Imaging workforce	01. Service Leadership
		02. Local Modality-specific Service Leadership
		03. Staffing Levels and Skill Mix
		04. Service Competences and Training Plan
		05. Agency, Bank and Locum Staff
		06. On-call and Out-of-hours' (Non-core) Working
		07. Administrative and Clerical Support
		08. Supporting Staff and Staff Wellbeing
		09 Supporting Staff in Training
XR-3	Scientific, technical and support for equipment	01. Clinical Scientific and Technical Support
		02. Equipment Management
		03. Equipment Quality Control and Quality Assurance
		04. Support Services
XR-4	Facilities and equipment	01. Facilities and Equipment
		02. Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) and Radiology IT Systems
		03. Moving and Handling Aids
		04. Equipment for Patients with Obesity
XR-5	Guidelines, protocols and clinical safety	01. Referral Management Guidelines
		02. Consent
		03. Image Optimisation
		04. Imaging in Pregnancy
		05. Imaging of Children and Young People
		06. Imaging of Patients with Additional Requirements
		07. Infection Prevention and Control
		08. Imaging Reporting Policy
		09. Quantification
		10. Unexpected Diagnoses and Potential Medical Emergencies
		11. Pathway and Condition-specific Protocols
		12. Forensic Imaging
		13. Management of Medicines and Contrast Media
		14. Ionising Radiation Safety
		15. Hazardous Substances

		16. Health and Safety
		17. Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning
XR-6	Service organisation and liaison with other services	01. Operational Policy
		02. Imaging Timescales
		03. Risk Management
		04. Service Improvement
		05 Service Development Plan
XR-7	Governance	01. Quality Management System
		02. Data Collection
		03. Audit
		04. Radiology Events and Learning Meetings
		05. Monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
		06. Research
		07. Review and Learning
8	Modality-Specific standards	
CT 8	Computerised tomography	01. CT Specific Training
		02. Contrast Media and Renal Function Protocol
		03. Trauma Management
		04. Clinical CT Pathways and Protocols
		05 Paediatric CT Protocols
IR 8	Interventional radiology	01. Interventional Radiology Safety Systems
		02. Access to Interventional Radio
		logy Procedures
		03. Admissions
		04. Facilities
		05. Contrast Media and Renal Function Protocol
		06. Clinical IR Pathways and Protocols
07 Paediatric IR Procedures		
MR 8	Magnetic resonance imaging	01. Staffing
		02. MR Specific Training
		03. MR Governance
		04. Quality Assurance
		05. Environment and Equipment
		06. Safety Screening
		07. Contrast Media and Renal Function Protocol
		08. Clinical MR Pathways and Protocols
		09 Paediatric MR Protocols
NM 8	Nuclear medicine and molecular imaging	01. Service Delivery
		02. Facilities
		03. Use of Radiopharmaceuticals and Radioactive Materials
		04. Receipt, Storage and Transport of Radioactive Materials
		05. Clinical Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Pathways and Protocols

		06.Paediatric Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Protocols
US 8	Ultrasound	01 Ultrasound Environment and Safety
		02 Ultrasound Specific Training
		03 Clinical Ultrasound Pathways and Protocols
		04 Paediatric Ultrasound Protocols

Navigating QSI 2021

QSI 2021 is accessible on both the [RCR website](#) and the [CoR website](#).

The new user-friendly layout allows services to easily locate any quality standard see all supporting information relevant to that standard. Professional guidance publications, standards and legislation relating to the standard have been hyperlinked throughout.

Where standards interlink these will be cross referenced in the notes, allowing services to reduce the burden of evidence.

Indicative inputs

Indicative inputs are listed for each QS. They are not exhaustive but are intended to be a helpful guide for services. We suggest that for each QS the service selects the appropriate indicative inputs relevant to the nature of their service delivery. Service may also wish to include additional indicative inputs. The QS will indicate when an input is a legislative requirement

Applicability of the QSI to services

QSI 2021 is applicable to any radiology service provider including tele-radiology services single modality provider services, NHS services and Independent sector providers.

The new layout allows services to easily identify which of the quality standards are applicable to their service.

Examples of applicability of QSI:

- All services
 - Quality standards in the following sections will be applicable to all service providers:
XR-2, XR-3, XR-6 and XR-7.
- Large organisation

The table below gives an example of a large NHS organisation with services across multiple sites.

Areas	Imaging service	CT	MR	IR	US	NM
	QSI sections	Only applicable if provided on site				
Organisation Main service site	XR	CT	MR	IR	US	NM
Site 1 Linked community site	XR as applicable	CT			US	
Site 2 Other providers (could be IS provision)	XR as applicable		MR		US	

- Tele-radiology service provider

The following sections would be applicable: XR-2, XR-3, XR-5 XR-7

- Single modality service provider – Ultrasound

The following sections would be applicable: XRs 1–7 and US-8

QSI 2021 enables service to further determine the applicability of quality standards within these sections. Service will only be assessed against those quality standards relevant to the service they provide.

Services currently engaged in QSI 2019 but not yet an applicant with UKAS

QSI 2021 looks very different to QSI 2019 the Domains have been removed and separated out into the sections as depicted in Table 1.

Any work undertaken and evidence collected on your QI journey relating to QSI 2019 will undoubtedly be useful in assessing against QSI 2021. To guide services the colleges have produced a development and support tool.

Services in applicant stage with UKAS and services accredited against QSI 2019

The process for transition to accreditation against QSI 2021 will be agreed between your service and UKAS.

Services new to QSI

Services are advised to contact the QI partners who will introduce them to the support and tools offered by the colleges.

QI partner support

The QI partners are able to offer the following support to all services involved in the QSI process:

- Monthly QSI network meetings
- Starting the journey presentation
- FutureNHS QSI Network
- QSI WhatsApp group
- Weekly development and support meetings to assist with the transition QSI 2021
- CPD-accredited presentations to staff
- Senior leadership engagement meetings
- Departmental visits
- QSI email updates
- Virtual, email and telephone support
- Resources/templates

For services new to QSI, we also offer an initial meeting to discuss and help you start the process.

Please contact the QI Partners at QSI@rcr.ac.uk

Resources

QSI 2021 Development and Support tool

Further resources available on the [RCR](#) and [CoR](#) websites include:

- Job descriptions (QI Lead - Band 7/ QI Facilitator – Band 4)
- Business case template
- FAQs
- Project plan example
- Policy/SOP templates
- FutureNHS QSI Network