

Online STI Testing Service [Accreditation Assessment Framework](#)

All online STI testing and screening services operating in Australia should comply with jurisdictional and national public health requirements.

Accreditation Assessment Framework

Standards	Criteria	Assessment Evidence	Score	Assessor Comments
1. Service Quality	<p>1.1 Becoming a user/client Can individuals create an account?</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines are evident on the website for individuals to create an account. 	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarity of Guidelines. Assess the clarity and accessibility of the account creation process, considering the simplicity of language, step-by-step guidance, and accessibility features. <p>Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Screenshots. Capture the account creation process and instructions. 2. User Feedback. Collect user feedback on their experience. 3. Accessibility Analysis. Ensure accessibility for users with disabilities, and language options. 		
	<p>1.2 Consent Information should be provided to individuals, so they understand what tests they are requesting and why, and any personal implications of a positive test.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p>	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility of Information. Evaluate the ease of finding details about consent, tests, reasons, and implications. Assess language clarity and navigation. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is easily accessible and clear on the website, including an option to contact the provider with any questions concerning consent. 	<p>2. Contact Option Visibility. Check for a clear contact option for consent-related queries.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Analysis. Review site layout and structure to assess the accessibility and clarity of information related to consent Contact Option Verification. Confirm presence and visibility of the contact option for questions about consent. Provide screenshots or documentation showing the location on website 		
	<p>1.3 Patient History: A patient history should be taken via a standardised intake method to assess risk and determine appropriate testing recommendations. 'Real-time direct consultation, whether in person, via video or telephone', remains recommended best practice, as per the Medical Board Aphra.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardised intake method and questions to be asked of users/clients is clearly outlined on the website. 	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of Intake Method. Assess how the standardised intake method and questions are presented on the website. <p>Evidence Needed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Review. Check for a dedicated section outlining the standardised intake method. Confirm clarity of instructions and presence of comprehensive questions in line with testing recommendations. Documentation Verification. Review provided documentation, 		

		such as downloadable forms or questionnaires, to confirm standardised intake questions.		
	<p>1.4 Assessment questions and Testing offered:</p> <p>Services should offer all tests recommended for a routine STI check-up according to Australian STI Management guidelines (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV), unless otherwise assessed by a qualified clinician based on identified risk factors. If the service is unable to offer all the recommended tests, this should be clearly acknowledged, and recommendations should be made for users to seek further testing elsewhere. Services should not promote or provide testing outside recommendations for asymptomatic screening for example Hepatitis A/B/C, Mycoplasma genitalium, bacterial vaginosis or HPV. Trichomonas should only be offered to patients residing in rural and remote areas. Opt out of any recommended tests is available. Services to provide tailored recommendations for additional testing or prevention interventions that may be indicated, based on information provided by the user.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing offered aligns with Australian STI Management guidelines. 	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Testing Alignment with Guidelines. Assess if the tests offered align with Australian STI Management guidelines, including chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and HIV. 2. Acknowledgment of Test Limitations. Check if the service acknowledges any inability to offer all recommended tests and provides recommendations for alternative testing. 3. Adherence to Screening Recommendations. Verify that the service does not promote or provide testing outside recommendations for asymptomatic screening, such as Hepatitis A/B/C, Mycoplasma genitalium, bacterial vaginosis, or HPV. 4. Geographical Restrictions for Testing:. Ensure Trichomonas testing is offered only to patients residing in rural and remote areas. 5. Option to Opt Out. Confirm the availability of an opt-out option for any recommended testing. 6. Tailored Recommendations. Check if the service provides 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for alternate testing service noted on website as required if service does not offer/is unable to perform all tests as per guidelines. • Testing outside recommendations for asymptomatic screening e.g. Hepatitis A/B/C, Mycoplasma genitalium, bacterial vaginosis or HPV is not recommended. • Trichomonas testing is only offered to patients residing in rural and remote areas. • Option to opt out of any recommended testing is available. 	<p>tailored recommendations for additional testing or prevention interventions based on user-provided information.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation Review. Examine the website or provided materials to verify the tests offered and any acknowledgment of limitations. 2. Comparison with Guidelines. Cross-reference the offered tests with Australian STI Management guidelines. 3. Policy Documentation. Look for policies or statements regarding asymptomatic screening and geographical restrictions for testing. 4. Confirmation of Opt-Out Option. Confirm the availability of an opt-out option for recommended testing. 5. User Feedback. Gather feedback from users to assess if tailored recommendations are provided based on their information. 		
	<p>1.5 Appropriate Testing sites: Services should provide testing at all appropriate sites, including oral, anal, and urogenital. If the service is unable to offer multi-site testing, this should be clearly acknowledged, and recommendations</p>	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Testing Site Availability. Verify if testing is offered at oral, anal, and urogenital sites. 		

	<p>should be made for uses to seek further testing elsewhere.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing offered at all appropriate sites, including oral, anal, and urogenital. • Recommendations for alternate testing service noted on website as required. 	<p>2. Acknowledgment of Limitations. Check if the service acknowledges any inability to offer multi-site testing and provides recommendations for alternative testing services.</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation Review. Check the website for information on available oral, anal, and urogenital testing sites. 2. Policy Documentation. Look for policies or statements acknowledging limitations in offering multi-site testing and providing recommendations for alternative testing services. 3. Comparison with Guidelines. Ensure testing sites align with established STI testing guidelines. 4. User Feedback. Gather user feedback to assess if the service adequately meets testing needs. 		
	<p>1.6 Testing type: All tests used to determine the presence of an STI require Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approval. All testing should follow Australian STI Management Guidelines.</p> <p>*Particular attention should be paid to point-of-care tests purchased overseas.</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Testing Compliance. Ensure all STI tests adhere to Australian STI Management Guidelines and have TGA approval. 2. Scrutiny of Point-of-Care Tests. Verify careful assessment of 		

	<p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All testing follows Australian STI Management Guidelines using tests approved by the TGA. 	<p>point-of-care tests purchased overseas.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation Review. Examine documentation or statements on the website regarding testing protocols, including adherence to Australian STI Management Guidelines and TGA approval. Verification of TGA Approval. Check there is evidence or documentation confirming TGA approval for the tests used. Policy Documentation. Look for policies or statements regarding the use of point-of-care tests purchased overseas and how they are scrutinized for compliance. Comparison with Guidelines. Cross-reference the tests used with established guidelines or standards for STI testing to ensure compliance. 		
	<p>1.7 Result Communication: All results must be communicated in a clear and timely manner (no more than 7 days post-test). Results should be communicated in a method that is secure and confidential. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure secure methods of communicating results. Location appropriate referrals for post-test</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Timely Communication. Verify if results are communicated within 7 days post-test. Secure Communication Method. Ensure a clear, secure, and confidential method of result communication is specified. 		

	<p>counselling and follow up testing should be provided. Services should have a documented process of action when a patient cannot be reached to deliver results.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results are communicated within 7 days post-test. • Secure and confidential method of communicating results is clear (please note method) • Location appropriate referrals for post-test counselling are provided. • Process of action is noted on the website if a patient cannot be reached to deliver results. 	<p>3. Referrals. Check if location-appropriate referrals for post-test counseling are provided.</p> <p>4. Process Documentation. Confirm the presence of a documented process for handling cases where patients cannot be reached for result delivery.</p> <p>Evidence Needed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Documentation Review. Examine documentation or statements on the website regarding result communication timelines and methods. 2. Verification of Secure Method. Check for specified methods like encrypted emails or secure online portals. 3. Referral Information Check. Look for provided referrals for post-test counselling and follow-up testing. 4. Policy Documentation. Ensure the presence of a documented process for handling cases of unreachability for result delivery. 		
	<p>1.8 Treatment: Services are not required to provide treatment but must provide a written referral and linkage to care (both to the client and care provider if known) that is, location and/or follow-up -appropriate referral for treatment.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <p>Documentation of Referral. Verify if the service provides a written referral for treatment.</p> <p>Linkage to Care. Ensure the referral includes appropriate information for</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written referral and linkage to care (both to the client and care provider, if known) is provided for client to access treatment. 	<p>accessing treatment, including location and follow-up details.</p> <p>Evidence Needed</p> <p>Referral Documentation. Review provided documentation to confirm the presence of a written referral for treatment.</p> <p>Linkage Information Verification. Check if the referral includes relevant details such as treatment location and follow-up instructions.</p> <p>User Feedback. Gather feedback from users to confirm if they received the referral and access treatment.</p>		
	<p>1.9 Partner Notification: Services should provide culturally sensitive partner notification information and list available services relevant for all potential service users.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner notification information and available services are listed on the website. 	<p>Measurement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Notification Information. Check if partner notification details are on the website. Listing of Services: Confirm if all relevant services are listed. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Review. Ensure partner notification details are present. Service Listing Check. Verify inclusion of relevant services. 		

		<p>3. Cultural Sensitivity Assessment. Evaluate cultural sensitivity of partner notification information.</p>		
	<p>1.10 Jurisdictional legislation: Services are required to comply with jurisdictional and national public health requirements, including the submission of notifiable condition forms where relevant. Jurisdictional requirements should be applied according to the state or territory that a client resides in at the time of testing. Information about specific jurisdictional requirements is available on the accreditation website.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant jurisdictional and national public health requirements for the submission of notifiable condition reporting are noted on the website. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <p>1. Public Health Reporting Requirements. Verify if the service mentions jurisdictional and national public health requirements for notifiable condition reporting on website.</p> <p>Evidence Needed:</p> <p>1. Website Content Review. Check the website content for explicit mention of jurisdictional and national public health requirements.</p> <p>2. Documentation Verification: Confirm if there are documents, links, or references provided regarding these requirements.</p> <p>3. ASHM Accreditation Website Cross-Check. Ensure that information aligns with details available on the ASHM accreditation website.</p>		
<p>2. Website Quality</p>	<p>2.1 Authority: All websites should provide information on authorship and supporting affiliates of the service, including purpose of the service.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <p>1. Authorship. Confirm if the website lists authorship.</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorship and supporting affiliates of the service are identifiable and noted on the website. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Affiliates. Check if supporting affiliates are mentioned. 3. Service Purpose. Verify if the service's purpose is stated. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Look for authorship, affiliates, and service purpose on the website. 2. Visibility Check. Ensure the information is clear and accessible. 		
	<p>2.2 Privacy and Confidentiality Websites must provide clear statements/policies of privacy and confidentiality pertaining to all aspects of data collection and storage. These statements/policies must be highly visible and accessible to all users.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy and confidentiality statements pertaining to all aspects of data collected are highly visible and accessible on the website. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy: Verify if privacy and confidentiality policies are on the website. 2. Visibility: Ensure these policies are highly visible and accessible. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review: Look for privacy and confidentiality statements. 2. Accessibility Check: Confirm that the policies are easy to find and clearly displayed 		
	<p>2.3 Attribution: When providing medical information (e.g. prevention, clinical information, testing, treatment, referral), websites should include reputable resources with citations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of Citations. Confirm if medical information includes citations. 2. Date Inclusion. Ensure citations include the date of publication. 		

	<p>including the date in which the information was published to the website.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputable resources with citations including the date in which the information was published to the website are included on the website. 	<p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Check medical information sections for reputable citations. 2. Date Verification. Verify that each citation includes a publication date. 		
	<p>2.4 Transparency: Websites should provide at least one point of contact, so users can communicate their questions and any issues relating to the service being provided.</p> <p>Websites should clearly outline processes for updating language, testing and treatment guidelines based on evidence based Australian recommendations in a timely manner.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one point of contact for users is noted on the website. • Processes for updating language, testing and treatment guidelines based on evidence based Australian recommendations in a timely manner are clearly evident on the website. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact Information. Check for at least one point of contact provided. 2. Update Processes. Verify clear outlining of processes for guideline updates. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review. Look for contact details and update processes on the website. 2. Content Check. Ensure clarity and visibility of contact information and update processes. 		
	<p>2.5 Recall services for re-testing Information regarding window periods for infection and when and how recall for testing occurs should be clear on the website.</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of Information. Check if the website provides information about window periods for 		

	<p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is clearly evident on the website. 	<p>infection and recall procedures for re-testing.</p> <p>2. Clarity and Accessibility: Ensure the information is clear and easily accessible.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Review. Look for sections detailing window periods and recall procedures. Content Check. Verify that the information is clear and understandable. Visibility Check. Ensure the information is easy to find on the website. 		
	<p>2.6 Referral to support: Services should provide links to information about support services, including peer services where relevant.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to information about support services, including peer services where relevant are noted on the website. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of Links. Check if the website provides links to support services, including relevant peer services. Accessibility. Confirm that these links are easily accessible. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Review. Look for links to support services on the website. Content Check. Verify that peer support services are included. 		

		3. Visibility Check. Ensure the links are prominently displayed and easy to find.		
	<p>2.7 Further information: Services should provide an up-to-date FAQ page with basic information about STIs, including the testing process and any subsequent follow up that may be required, and consumer-facing information about specific STIs. For example, what to expect following a diagnosis of a specific STI. This information should be referenced and/or linked to Australian government developed fact sheets. Additionally, information about the expected time periods for requesting or purchasing testing via the online platform to receiving the test result should be advised.</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FAQ Page Presence. Verify if there is an up-to-date FAQ page. 2. Content Completeness. Ensure the FAQ page covers basic STI information, the testing process, follow-up, and specific STIs. 3. References. Check for references or links to Australian government fact sheets. 4. Timeline Information. Confirm that information about timeframes for testing and results is provided. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. 2. Look for an FAQ page. 3. Check the FAQ content for comprehensive STI information and links to government resources. 4. Verify the inclusion of timelines for testing and receiving results. 		
3. Additional considerations	3.1 Accessibility 3.1.1 Rural access:	Measurement:		

	<p>Services should, to the best of their ability, provide service options to individuals living in rural and remote areas of Australia.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service options available to individuals living in rural and remote areas of Australia are clearly evident on the website. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Service Availability. Check if the website details service options for rural and remote areas. 2. Accessibility. Ensure this information is easily accessible. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Look for sections addressing service options for rural and remote areas. 2. Visibility Check. Confirm the information is easy to find and clearly displayed. 		
	<p>3.1.2 Language:</p> <p>Services should provide information in multiple languages or provide information in a way that is culturally safe and translatable based on translation technology that is currently available. Gender-neutral language and images and culturally sensitive images are encouraged as and where feasible and appropriate. Use lay language and avoid language that is normative and stigmatising.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is provided in lay language, multiple languages or provided in a way that is culturally safe and translatable. • Gender-neutral language and images are adopted where feasible and appropriate. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language Options. Check if the website provides information in multiple languages or uses translation features. 2. Lay Language. Ensure information is in lay language. 3. Inclusivity. Verify use of gender-neutral and culturally sensitive language and images. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Look for multilingual options and lay language use. 		

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Content Check. Confirm gender-neutral and culturally sensitive language and images. 3. User Feedback. Collect feedback on inclusivity and cultural appropriateness. 		
	<p>3.2 Cost</p> <p>3.2.1 Cost transparency: Websites should ensure transparency around costings including Medicare coverage and charges for consultation and pathology as feasible.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costings including Medicare coverage and charges for consultation and pathology are noted on the website. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost Information: Verify if the website provides detailed cost information, including Medicare coverage and charges for consultation and pathology. 2. Transparency: Ensure the cost information is clear and detailed. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Check for sections listing costs, Medicare coverage, and charges for consultation and pathology. 2. Clarity Check: Confirm that the cost information is easy to understand. 		
	<p>3.2.2 Medicare ineligibility: Where services require a Medicare card, information should be provided about where to access services for those who are Medicare-ineligible.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p>	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information. Check if the website provides information for Medicare-ineligible individuals. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about where to access services for those who are Medicare-ineligible is noted on the website. 	<p>2. Accessibility. Ensure this information is easily accessible.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Website Review. Look for sections addressing Medicare-ineligible individuals. Visibility Check. Verify the information is easy to find and clearly displayed. 		
	<p>3.3 Non-stigmatising and inclusive: Services should ensure that language and images used on the site are non-stigmatising about STIs or towards priority populations.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and images used on the website are non-stigmatising in relation to STIs or towards priority populations. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Language Review. Ensure the language used on the website is non-stigmatising. Visual Review. Verify that images are inclusive and non-stigmatising. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Content Analysis. Review website content for non-stigmatising language. Visual Review. Check website images to confirm they are inclusive and non-stigmatising. Feedback. Gather feedback from diverse user groups to assess the inclusivity of the content and images. 		

	<p>3.4 STI prevention STI prevention messaging should be easily accessible on the website.</p> <p>Evidence required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STI prevention information is clearly evident on the website. 	<p>Measurement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of Information. Confirm the presence of STI prevention information on the website. 2. Accessibility. Ensure the information is easily accessible. <p>Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Website Review. Check the website for STI prevention messaging. 2. Accessibility Check. Verify that the information is easy to find and clearly displayed. 		
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Assessment criteria

How well do the criteria meet the requirements outlined in the Online STI Testing Service Quality Framework?

Strongly agree = 5

Criteria meets all requirements of the Quality Framework Standards

Agree = 4

Criteria meets most of the requirements of the Quality Framework Standards

Neutral = 3

Disagree = 2

Criteria meets some of the requirements of the Quality Framework Standards

Strongly disagree = 1

Criteria meets none of the requirements of the Quality Framework Standards

Scores of x/x meet criteria for accreditation.

Scores of x/x do not meet criteria for accreditation.

Recommendations

Accreditation Approval	Recommendations
Accreditation granted	Provider to receive a report based on the review. Progress with meeting to debrief provider on the review and accreditation process and share communications materials to advertise their accreditation status, and information about how to maintain accreditation.
Accreditation not granted	Provider may reapply, addressing the gaps outlined in the report.