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# Purpose

To provide information to clinical employees on professional criteria required to be approved as a Prescriber under the Territory Equipment Program

# Guideline

The Territory Equipment Program (TEP) requires that equipment prescribers meet the necessary qualifications and levels of experience as detailed below.

1. **Principles of Equipment Prescription**

The Northern Territory Health is committed to decisions being:

* Person-centred
* Culturally secure
* Future focussed
* Equitable
* Flexible and responsive
* Collaborative
* Sustainable
* Outcome driven

1. **Approved Prescribers**

All allied health professionals and specialist nurses must be registered as Approved Prescribers with the TEP in order to prescribe TEP aids and equipment.

Registration of Approved Prescribers recognises prescribers’ advanced knowledge in equipment prescription, facilitates professional development of equipment prescription skills, and will create a central list for therapists in the Northern Territory to receive notification of equipment updates and educational opportunities.

1. **Professional Criteria for Approved Prescribers**
2. Prescribers must have the stipulated professional qualification and experience to prescribe from different TEP Equipment Types, as detailed in the TEP Clinical Guidelines.
3. Equipment groups and professional criteria determine the equipment level at which a prescriber may prescribe, see Table 1.
4. Prescription of Level 1 General Equipment only requires that the prescriber has the stipulated professional qualification. Prescription of Level 2 General Equipment and Level 2 Seating Equipment requires the prescriber to also have relevant prescribing experience. This is defined as:

* The amount of time a prescriber has worked with the prescription of equipment; and
* The number of equipment prescriptions previously completed in that equipment group and type.

1. Prescribers complete a declaration on the TEP Prescription Form to confirm that they meet the Professional Criteria for Prescribers.
2. These requirements do not replace:

* The need to document the clinical assessment and clinical reasoning underlying equipment prescription; or
* The need for clinical supervision in the workplace, particularly where the prescriber is a new graduate or new to the field of practice.

**Table 1: Equipment Groups**

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| **Equipment Group** | **Professional Criteria** |
| **Level 1 General Equipment** | |
| * Simple to set-up and use * Not custom-made * Frequently prescribed; and * Stands alone and is not integrated with other equipment | Stipulated Qualification only. |
| **Level 2 General Equipment** | |
| * Complex to set-up and requires training to use safely; or * Potential adverse outcome for a client/carer/attendant care worker if not prescribed or used appropriately; or * Custom-made; or * Infrequently prescribed; or * Integrated or interfaces with other equipment. | Stipulated Qualification; and   * Greater than 1 year clinical experience; and * 3 previous prescriptions for Level 2 General equipment in the specified Equipment Type. |
| **Level 2 Seating Equipment** | |
| * Consists of several component pieces of equipment that must integrate to achieve the goal for the client; or * Due to the risk to the client the clinical expertise of a Specialised Seating Clinician is required to prescribe accurately. | Stipulated Qualification; and   * Greater than 3 years clinical experience; and * 3 previous prescriptions for Level 2 Specialised Seating Equipment in the specified Equipment Type. |

* 1. **Level 1 Equipment and Complex Clients**

1. Level 1 Equipment may be prescribed for a client with a complex condition such as significant neurological impairment or spinal injury. Although qualification alone is required in this instance, inexperienced prescribers should still seek or use additional clinical supervision to ensure that the prescription is correct.
   1. **Approved Prescriber Level**
2. Registered Level 1 Approved Prescribers may wish to prescribe more complex Level 2 equipment. Prescribers will need DEP prescriptions endorsed by a higher level Approved Prescriber. If there is no higher level Approved Prescriber in their region, the prescriber will need to seek higher level Approved Prescriber endorsement from another region. The TEP Clinical Leader may assist to identify an appropriate Approved Prescriber.
3. Speech pathologists registered as a Level 1 Approved Prescriber may prescribe Level 2 Communication Aids and Devices where there is no Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level in the NT due to the infrequency of prescription. In this instance they will need:

* More than 1 year clinical experience; and
* Prescriptions must be co-signed by Approved Prescriber Speech Pathologist with 5 or more years of experience.

1. Where there is no Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level in the NT prescribers may need to assess and trial equipment with the support of experienced interstate prescribers. Prescribers will need TEP prescriptions endorsed by the experienced interstate prescriber. Interstate prescribers will need to be registered as TEP Approved Prescribers or provide proof of a relevant equivalent registration, in another State or Territory.
   1. **Endorsing Prescriptions**
2. Therapists registered as a Level 1 Approved Prescriber may wish to prescribe more complex Level 2 equipment. The prescription must be endorsed by an Approved Prescriber of the appropriate level for that equipment. The prescribing therapist will be the point of contact if there is any additional information required.
3. To endorse a prescription the higher level Approved Prescriber will co-sign the prescription form to acknowledge that all necessary assessments and clinical considerations have been completed and that the prescription is appropriate to the client.
4. Level 2 Communication Aid and Device prescriptions will require an Approved Prescriber Speech Pathologist to co-sign as outlined at 4.2b.
   1. **Professional Qualification Specific Approved Prescribers**
5. When completing the TEP Approved Prescriber Registration Form applicants nominate the equipment type and level at which they wish to prescribe. If applicants nominate an equipment type in which TEP Clinical Guidelines do not permit their professional qualification to prescribe, the applicant will be ineligible to prescribe in that equipment type.
6. Regions that do not have access to health professionals representing several professional qualifications in a single location, may undertake education programs to train health professionals to prescribe equipment for clients. In this case prescribers may complete the TEP Prescription Form but it will need to be endorsed by an Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level for that equipment type.
7. Individuals without the stipulated qualifications, who have highly specialised skills in a particular clinical area, may apply to be an Approved Prescriber for a specific equipment type outside their professional qualification. The applicant must complete all sections of the Approved Prescriber Registration Form to provide written clinical evidence that they have completed a minimum number of prescriptions for that equipment type, regardless of level. The applicant will be advised of the level and type of equipment they are approved to prescribe.
   1. **Inexperienced Prescribers Prescribing Under Supervision**
8. Prescribing therapists who do not meet the professional criteria, may prescribe under the supervision of a clinician who is an Approved Prescriber for the level of equipment being prescribed. The prescribing therapist will be the point of contact if there is any additional information required.
9. The format and level of supervision provided by the supervisor remains the responsibility of the clinical team to determine. The TEP Prescription Form will need to be endorsed by an Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level for that type of equipment before it is submitted.
   1. **Therapist Awaiting Approved Prescriber Registration**
10. A prescriber awaiting the outcome of their registration application, such as therapists new to working in the Northern Territory or new graduates, may prescribe equipment appropriate to their professional qualification but will need their TEP Prescription Forms endorsed by an Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level for that type of equipment. The prescribing therapist will be the point of contact if there is any additional information required.
    1. **Lack of Eligible Prescribers**
11. In circumstances where a client’s access to equipment may be compromised due to a lack of Approved Prescribers (for example in rural or remote areas), prescribing therapists may prescribe under the supervision of a prescriber from another region who is an Approved Prescriber for that equipment.
12. The prescription will need to be endorsed by an Approved Prescriber at the appropriate level for that equipment. The prescribing therapist will be the point of contact if there is any additional information required.
    1. **Eligible Prescribers Employed by Equipment Suppliers**
13. All prescribers must comply with the principle that the prescriber of equipment must be removed from the commercial supply of the equipment, in order to eliminate and prevent any perceived or actual conflict of interest. As with the example of medication prescription and supply where a doctor prescribes and a pharmacist dispenses (supplies).
14. **Registration**

Registration of Approved Prescribers recognises prescribers’ advanced knowledge in equipment prescription, facilitates professional development of equipment prescription skills, and will create a central list for therapists in the Northern Territory to receive notification of equipment updates and educational opportunities.

* 1. **Initial Application for Registration**

Applicants are required to:

1. Complete the TEP AP-2 Application Form for Approved Prescriber Registration; and
2. Provide evidence of relevant qualifications:

* Copy of Registration Certificate with the relevant Professional Registration Board; or
* For Speech Pathologists certified copies of:
* proof of qualification (Graduation Certificate); and
* proof of name change, where relevant;

1. For Level 2 (General and Seating) Approved Prescriber status:

* Demonstrate relevant experience in the clinical field relevant to the nominated Equipment Type for which the applicant wishes Approved Prescriber status; and
* List two (2) referees who are prescribers/experienced therapists in the disciplines related to the nominated equipment prescription areas;

1. Send the completed Application Form for Approved Prescriber Registration and accompanying documentation to:

Territory Equipment Program (TEP)

Approved Prescriber Registration

PO Box 40596

Casuarina NT 0811

Or

[TopEndIntake.THS@nt.gov.au](mailto:TopEndIntake.THS@nt.gov.au)

1. All applications will be reviewed by an independent panel of clinicians (TEP Advisory Committee) to determine prescriber eligibility. All applicants will receive notification of the outcome of their application in writing.
   1. **Renewal of Registration**
2. Once approved and registered as an Approved Prescriber renewal of registration is not required.
3. Annual registration with approved professional registration board will be checked to ensure therapists have up to date registration and continue to meet Professional Criteria for Prescribers.
4. Level 2 Approved Prescribers may be asked to demonstrate ongoing experience, professional development or training undertaken to maintain their skills at the level described in their registration application.
   1. **Application for Change in Approved Prescriber Level**
5. A Level 1 Approved Prescriber may wish to apply to become registered at a higher level (Level 2, General or Seating). The prescriber needs to have the appropriate level of clinical experience and must have completed a minimum number of prescriptions at the higher level.
6. To become registered as an Approved Prescriber at a higher level (Level 2, General or Seating) registered Level 1 prescribers must re-apply by completing the TEP Approved Prescriber Registration Form. Applicants must complete all sections to be considered for Level 2 status.
7. Applicants can apply for Level 2 Approved Prescriber status on their initial application.
   1. **Appeal Process**
8. Applicants may appeal the decision made by the Advisory Committee. This must be submitted in writing and will require the applicant to provide additional supportive information.
9. The appeal will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee with the aim to objectively review the application and issue of concern. Appeal outcomes to the appellant’s dissatisfaction may be referred to the Community Allied Health Senior Manager

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| Quality Assurance | | |
|  | **Method** | **Responsibility** | |
| **Implementation** | Document will be available for access via the PGC | PGC Administrators | |
| **Review** | Document will be reviewed within 5 years or when changes in practice occur |  | |
| **Evaluation** | Document will be evaluated informally at time of review |  | |
| **Compliance** |  |  | |

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| Key Associated Documents | |
| **Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned & Supporting Documents** | TEP Clinical Guidelines  TEP Policy and Procedure Manual |
| **References** | EnableNSW – New South Wales:  [www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au)  State-Wide Equipment Program (SWEP) – Victoria  [www.swep.bhs.org.au](http://www.swep.bhs.org.au)  ACT Equipment Scheme ACTES – Australian Capital Territory  [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)  Community Aids and Equipment Program CAEP – Western Australia  [www.disability.wa.gov.au](http://www.disability.wa.gov.au)  Community Equipment Scheme CES – Tasmania  [www.concessions.tas.gov.au](http://www.concessions.tas.gov.au)  Department for Community and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Equipment Scheme – South Australia  [www.sa.gov.au](http://www.sa.gov.au)  Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) – Queensland  [www.health.qld.gov.au/mass](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass) |

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| Definitions, Acronyms and Alternative Search Terms | |
| Term | Description |
| **Approved Prescriber** | An allied health professional or specialist nurse registered with the TEP with prescribing rights according to professional qualification, experience and type of aid/equipment. |
| **Prescriber** | An allied health professional or specialist nurse who recommends equipment for a client. The prescribing therapist will consider the client’s intellectual, sensory, physical or mental health status, environment, functional capacity and equipment needs. The prescribing therapist will be responsible for the issue, follow-up, monitoring and review associated with the equipment. |

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| Evidence | | | |
| **Reference** | **Method** | **Evidence Level (I-V)** | **Summary of Recommendation from this Reference** |
| N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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| **National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards** | | | | | | | |
| cid:image001.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Clinical Governance | cid:image002.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Partnering with Consumers | cid:image003.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infection | cid:image004.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Medication Safety | Comprehensive care icon  Comprehensive Care | cid:image006.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Communicating for Safety | cid:image007.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Blood Management | cid:image008.jpg@01D658ED.D030F090  Recognising & Responding to Acute Deterioration |
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