Queensland Health

Checking QScript

A guide for relevant practitioners on the mandatory requirement to check QScript (Version 2.0)

Queensland Government

Checking QScript - A guide for relevant practitioners on the mandatory requirement to check QScript

For more information contact:

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Disclaimer:

Contents

The information in this guide describes legislative requirements that are in effect up to (and including) 30 June 2024.

On **1 July 2024**, amendments to the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 (MPMR) come into effect to exempt relevant practitioners from the requirement to check QScript in specified low-risk circumstances. Detailed guidance on QScript look-up requirements from 1 July 2024 is available in the QScript look-up exemption: frequently asked questions guide.

Post-1 July 2024, this **Checking QScript** guide will be updated to incorporate content from the **QScript look-up exemptions: frequently asked questions** guide to reflect the new legislative requirements.

1 Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to assist 'relevant practitioners' who practise in Queensland—dentists, medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives, pharmacists, intern pharmacists, endorsed podiatrists and podiatric surgeons—in understanding and meeting their legislative requirements, under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (Qld) (MPA), to check QScript, Queensland's real-time prescription monitoring system.

Printed copies of this guide are uncontrolled and may not be current. To access the most up-to-date version, please visit:
https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/1247470/guide-checking-QScript.pdf

2 Guidance

2.1 General questions

2.1.1 Who is required to check QScript?

'Relevant practitioners' required to check QScript[1] are specified in Schedule 18, Part 1 of the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 as:

- dentists
- medical practitioners
- nurse practitioners
- endorsed midwives
- pharmacists and intern pharmacists
- endorsed podiatrists and podiatric surgeons.

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[1] QScript is the 'monitored medicines database' referred to in the MPA framework.

2.1.2 When is checking QScript mandatory?

QScript look-up requirements change on 1 July 2024. View the QScript look-up exemptions: frequently asked questions guide for more information.

In accordance with section 41 of the MPA, all relevant practitioners practising in Queensland must check QScript for patient records before:

- **prescribing** a monitored medicine for a patient
- **dispensing** a monitored medicine for a patient
- **giving a treatment dose** of a monitored medicine for a patient.

Per section 41(3) of the MPA, the requirement to check QScript does not apply if the relevant practitioner has a **reasonable excuse** or if a relevant **exemption** (specified in the MPMR) applies.

Reasonable excuses are determined on a case-by-case basis.

From 1 July 2024, relevant practitioners are exempted from the requirement to check QScript in the circumstances specified in Schedule 18, Part 1A of the MPMR. View the QScript look-up exemptions: frequently asked questions guide for more information

To remove any ambiguity about when QScript look-up is required, the terms **prescribe, dispense** and **give a treatment dose** are defined in the table below.

Definition	Examples	Comments
Prescribe, in relation to a medicine, means direct a person, orally or in writing, to administer, dispense or give a treatment dose of the medicine for the treatment of a person or animal.[2]	- A general practitioner writes a prescription for a medicine that is to be dispensed by a pharmacist. - An endorsed midwife orally directs a nurse to administer a medicine to a patient.	- Prescribing is a direction for treatment to be carried out by another person. - Prescribing includes oral and written directions, in any authorised form e.g. medication chart, PBS or private prescription.

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[2] Definition for 'prescribe' in Schedule 1 of the MPA.

Definition	Examples	Comments
Dispense a medicine means sell the medicine to a person on prescription.[3]	A pharmacist receives a written prescription, processes it, and supplies the prescribed medicine to a patient.	• Dispensing requires a prescription (oral or written). • In Queensland, only pharmacists and medical practitioners have as-of-right authority under the MPMR to dispense medicines for the treatment of a person.
Give a treatment dose of a medicine means give one or more doses of the medicine to a person to be taken by a particular person, or administered to an animal, at a later time.[4]	A medical practitioner directly gives a quantity of a medicine to a patient for the patient to consume the next day.	Medicines given as treatment doses are given to a person to be taken by a particular stated person, as instructed, at a later time.

2.1.3 How can I access QScript?

You can access QScript to check for patient records in two ways.

1. **Via the web-based portal**

You can log in to QScript via www.qscript.health.qld.gov.au and manually search for a patient.

2. **Via your existing clinical software, if it is integrated with QScript**

QScript is designed to integrate with existing clinical software. If your clinical software is integrated with QScript, green, amber, or red notifications will appear on your screen when entering monitored medicine prescription information into your prescribing or dispensing software.

- **Red notifications** indicate that one or more high-risk clinical scenario alerts have been triggered. Red notifications include a link to take you directly to the patient's QScript profile.

- **Amber notifications** indicate that a matching patient profile has been found, but no high-risk clinical scenario alert has been triggered. Amber notifications include a link to take you directly to the patient's QScript profile.

- **Green notifications** indicate that no matching patient profile has been found, and no alerts have been triggered by the proposed prescribe/dispense event. Green notifications include a link to take you directly to the patient search screen in case you

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[3] Section 25(2) of the MPA.

[4] Section 25(3) of the MPA.

would like to manually search for the patient (although there is no legal requirement to do this).

If you are unsure whether your clinical software is currently integrated or capable of integration with QScript, talk to your clinical software vendor in the first instance.

Depending on the information held in QScript, a patient's profile may contain:

- **medication history** (records of monitored medicine prescribing and dispensing events)
- **regulatory information** (e.g. information about prescribing approvals or Queensland Opioid Treatment Program (QOTP) admissions)
- both **medication history** and **regulatory information.**

> If a patient's profile contains **medication history**, QScript will display this page first, by default.

If a patient's profile contains both medication history and regulatory information, it is recommended you view information in both pages, to assist you in your risk assessments and clinical decision-making.

The View Medication History and View a Patient Profile help topics provide guidance on how to do this.

2.1.4 How can I meet my legislative requirement to check QScript?

As a relevant practitioner, you will have met the legislative requirement to check QScript if before prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for a patient one of the following four (4) actions took place.

#	Action	Comments
1	**When using clinical software integrated with QScript**—you opened QScript via the link on a **red notification** or **amber notification** and viewed the patient's QScript profile.	• The display of a **red** or **amber** notification alone does not constitute 'checking QScript'—if you receive a **red** or **amber** notification **you must view the patient's QScript profile** to meet your legislative requirement to check QScript (unless exempt under the MPMRe). • If you receive multiple **red** or **amber** notifications in the same consultation (e.g. you are prescribing/dispensing multiple monitored medicine prescriptions for the patient) you are only required to view the patient's QScript profile **once** during that consultation to meet your legislative requirement to check QScript.

#	Action	Comments
2	**When using clinical software integrated with QScript**—you received a **green notification**	• The display of a **green** notification means you have met your legislative requirement to check QScript. • There is no legislative requirement to log in to QScript or conduct a manual patient search if a **green** notification displays. • However, if the display of a **green** notification is inconsistent with your knowledge of the patient (e.g. they are a regular patient who you have previously prescribed monitored medicines to), consider manually searching for the patient using different permutations of their details. The QScript troubleshooting guide provides guidance on this.
3	**When using the QScript portal**—you manually searched for the patient and <u>viewed the patient's QScript profile</u>	If your search returns more than one matching profile for the patient, it is recommended you: • view each duplicate profile to ensure you obtain a comprehensive understanding of the patient's risk profile • request the QScript technical support team to merge the duplicate profiles, by calling 1800 776 633 or emailing IT.QScript@health.qld.gov.au • check that the patient's information is accurately recorded in your clinical software (cross-referencing with patient ID if required) and correct any errors, to prevent the creation of further duplicates.
4	**When using the QScript portal**—you manually searched for the patient, but <u>no matching patient profile was found</u>	If the absence of a matching patient profile is inconsistent with your knowledge of the patient (e.g. they are a regular patient who you have previously prescribed monitored medicines to), consider conducting further manual searches using different permutations of the patient's details. The QScript troubleshooting guide provides guidance on this.

2.1.5 What should I do if I can't check QScript when required?

If you cannot access QScript (e.g. internet outage), you should:

• make a clinical judgement about appropriate treatment based on the information available to you; and
• make a record of the circumstances which prevented you from checking QScript.

You may check the patient's QScript profile later (when you are able to access QScript) to inform your therapeutic treatment of the patient, but there is no requirement to do this.

The decision on whether to prescribe or supply a monitored medicine for a patient always remains with you (as the relevant practitioner), irrespective of whether you have been able to access QScript.

2.2 Compliance questions

2.2.1 Can I delegate QScript look-up to a colleague?

No. The requirement to check QScript applies to the relevant practitioner proposing to prescribe, dispense or give a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for a person.

2.2.2 Can I check QScript for all of my patients on the day prior to/the morning of clinic starting?

To ensure you meet your legislative requirements for QScript look-up, it is strongly recommended that QScript checks are done at a reasonable time before the proposed action of prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for a person (as close to the proposed action as possible in the circumstances).

A reasonable time would be determined on a case-by-case basis. Any regulatory action is assessed on the circumstances.

2.2.3 I'm administering a monitored medicine to a person—am I required to check QScript?

No. Under the MPA, *administering* a medicine means introducing a dose of the medicine into the body of a person or animal by any means or giving a dose of the medicine to a person to be taken immediately. [5]

It refers to activities where a patient is immediately dosed with a medicine. For example:

- a pharmacist injecting a medicine into a patient
- a nurse practitioner applying a patch to a patient's skin
- a medical practitioner handing a dose of tablets to a patient for the patient to swallow immediately.

> There is **no requirement** for a relevant practitioner to check QScript when administering a monitored medicine to a person.

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[5] Section 26 of the MPA.

2.2.4 I'm dispensing a veterinary prescription for a monitored medicine—am I required to check QScript?

No. The requirement to check QScript applies when prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine *for a person* only.

Currently, registration to access QScript is only available to relevant practitioners for the treatment of a person, which does not include veterinary surgeons. If you are registered to access QScript you should not check QScript for any purpose relevant to the treatment of an animal because:

- Under Schedule 18 of the MPMR and the QScript 'Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners', access to QScript is provided to health practitioners for the purposes of:
  - recording and reviewing information for the therapeutic treatment of patients (i.e. *persons*, not animals); and
  - complying with requirements under the MPA and MPMR relevant to the health practitioner.

  As these circumstances do not apply in relation to dispensing veterinary prescriptions, checking QScript in this context is not authorised under the MPA, MPMR and QScript Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners.

- Unless inadvertently recorded, veterinary prescription information is not recorded in QScript and there is no therapeutic value for a patient in searching for this information.

2.2.5 I'm a pharmacist—do I have to check QScript every time I administer or supply a dispensed QOTP medicine to a patient?

No. Prior to administering or supplying the first dose of a QOTP medicine on a QOTP prescription, you must first:

- check QScript
- dispense the medicine and make the associated dispensing record[6] in your dispensing software.

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[6] See section 124 of the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021.

For each QOTP prescription, the mandatory requirement to check QScript only applies prior to the medicine being *dispensed*; there is no requirement for you to check QScript before administering/supplying subsequent daily doses of a dispensed QOTP medicine to a patient.

After checking QScript and dispensing a medicine on a QOTP prescription, you are welcome to check QScript before administering/supplying subsequent daily doses of the dispensed medicine, to inform your therapeutic treatment of a patient, but there is no requirement under the MPA to do so.

2.2.6 If multiple pharmacists are involved in the dispensing process, which pharmacist must check QScript?

The pharmacist making the dispensing record is the pharmacist required to check QScript.

2.2.7 I'm located in Queensland but prescribing a monitored medicine for a patient in another state/territory—do I have to check QScript?

Yes. If you are located and practising in Queensland, you must comply with relevant Queensland legislative obligations, including the requirement to check QScript.

2.2.8 I'm practising in another state/territory—am I required to check QScript?

No. You are not required to check QScript when practising in another state/territory. You will, however, be required to comply with any applicable requirements of the state/territory within which you are practising, including any requirements in relation to use of the real-time prescription monitoring system in that state/territory.

2.2.9 I'm prescribing/dispensing multiple monitored medicines in one consultation—do I have to check QScript for every prescription?

No. If you are prescribing/dispensing multiple monitored medicine prescriptions contemporaneously, you are only required to view the patient's QScript profile **once** during that consultation to meet your legislative requirement to check QScript.

From a technical point of view, your ability to 'dismiss' red and amber QScript notifications generated during the checking process will depend on how your clinical software provider has implemented QScript notifications in their system.

If your software does not allow you to 'dismiss' red and amber notifications, and if this is a matter of concern, you may wish to provide feedback about this to your clinical software provider.

2.2.10 Do I need to click 'View Alert History' or 'View Access History' to meet my legislative requirement to check QScript?

No.

2.2.11 How can I confirm whether I have checked a patient's QScript profile?

Click the 'View Access History' button at the top-right of a patient's profile to see information about health practitioners who have viewed the patient's profile. If you have previously checked that profile, your details will display here.

Visit the See who has viewed a patient help topic for further information.

2.2.12 What penalties apply if I do not check QScript when required?

A maximum penalty of 20 penalty units (maximum of $3096 as at 1 July 2023) may apply if a relevant practitioner fails to check QScript when required, without a reasonable excuse.

2.3 Other look-up questions

2.3.1 I am practising (physically located) in Queensland—when am I permitted to check QScript?

Under the MPA, MPMR and QScript Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners, when you are practising in Queensland you are authorised to use QScript for the purposes of:

- recording or reviewing information for the therapeutic treatment of patients; or
- complying with requirements under the MPA applying to you.

> For example, in addition to when you are prescribing, dispensing or giving a treatment dose of a monitored medicine for person, you would be authorised to view a patient's QScript profile for the following purposes (non-exhaustive):
>
> - taking the clinical history of a patient—to establish a diagnosis
>
> - conducting a medication review with a patient—to identify and mitigate medicine-related risks

- assessing the risk of harm to a patient (e.g. risk of overdose or substance use disorder)—to inform the development of the patient's treatment plan

- seeking information about whether a patient is registered on the QOTP or subject to a prescribing approval—to inform your clinical decision-making and/or assist you in complying with relevant requirements under the MPA

- confirming when a patient was last dispensed a particular monitored medicine—to inform your clinical decision-making

- identifying other prescribers involved a patient's care—to support the delivery of collaborative and patient-centred care.

There are offences and strict penalties for inappropriate use or disclosure of information contained in QScript. Unauthorised use of QScript may be a criminal offence (section 408E of the Criminal Code.

QScript maintains a log of the patient searches a health practitioner has performed and which patient profiles they have viewed, enabling Queensland Health to proactively and reactively audit system use. Health practitioners should ensure they keep adequate records about the care they provide to patients, as they may be required to justify why they accessed QScript in a particular circumstance.

2.3.2 I am practising (physically located) in a state/territory **other than Queensland**—when am I permitted to check QScript?

Under the MPA, MPMR and QScript Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners, when you are practising in a state/territory other than Queensland, you are authorised to use QScript for the purpose of recording or reviewing information for the therapeutic treatment of patients if:

- the patient is ordinarily resident in Queensland

or

- you reasonably believe the patient has been prescribed or dispensed a monitored medicine in Queensland.

There are offences and strict penalties for inappropriate use or disclosure of QScript information. Unauthorised use of QScript may be a criminal offence (section 408E of the Criminal Code), irrespective of where the health practitioner is located.

QScript maintains a log of the patient searches a health practitioner has performed and which patient profiles they have viewed, enabling Queensland Health to proactively and reactively audit system use. Health practitioners should ensure they keep adequate records about the care they provide to patients, as they may be required to justify why they accessed QScript in a particular circumstance.

2.3.3 Can/should I check QScript for the owner/custodian of an animal?

No. Searching QScript for the owner or custodian of an animal (i.e. a person who is not the patient subject of treatment with monitored medicines), is not an authorised access or use of QScript under the MPA, MPMR and QScript Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners.

2.3.4 Can/should I check QScript for the parent, guardian, caregiver or family member of a child patient?

No. Searching QScript for the parent/guardian/caregiver/family member of a child patient (i.e. a person who is not the patient subject of treatment with monitored medicines), is not an authorised access or use of QScript under the MPA, MPMR and QScript Terms of Access and Use – Health Practitioners.

2.3.5 Can a person other than a 'relevant practitioner' check QScript?

No. At this time, 'relevant practitioners' (dentists, medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives, pharmacists, intern pharmacists, endorsed podiatrists and podiatric surgeons) are the only health practitioners authorised to register for and access QScript.

2.4 System questions

2.4.1 Why do QScript notifications show as 'not viewed' when I have viewed the patient's profile in QScript?

There are some circumstances where the 'Notifications' grid on the practitioner dashboard indicates that certain notifications were 'Not Viewed', despite practitioners reasonably believing they had in fact viewed them.

Queensland Health is currently considering options to address this matter.

Please note that information from the Notifications grid is **not** used to determine whether a relevant practitioner has complied with their requirement to check QScript.

It is recommended that health practitioners click the 'View Access History' button on a patient's profile if they want to confirm whether they have checked the profile previously (please note this log is updated hourly, so there may be a lag between when you viewed a profile and when a record of that view is displayed in the 'View Access History' grid).

2.4.2 I have searched for a patient in QScript but no record was found—why?

It is possible that the patient does not have a QScript profile or your search criteria did not match the patient's details in QScript. The QScript troubleshooting guide provides further detail on this matter and what you should do if you cannot find a patient profile which you believe should there.

2.4.3 Does QScript record which profiles I have searched for or viewed?

Yes. QScript maintains an audit trail of the patient searches a health practitioner has performed and which patient profiles they have viewed.

3 Support and guidance

3.1 QScript technical support

Technical help is available on the QScript Help page and in the QScript troubleshooting guide, which provides guidance in relation to commonly encountered questions or system matters.

> If you are unable to resolve your technical issue after reviewing the above resources, please contact QScript technical support on:
>
> **Phone:** 1800 776 633 or
>
> **Email:** IT.QScript@health.qld.gov.au
>
> **Please note, the QScript technical support team cannot provide regulatory or clinical advice.**

In some cases, technical difficulties may be associated with your clinical software (as opposed to QScript). If this is the case, please contact your clinical software provider to investigate the issue in the first instance.

3.2 QScript guidance

The QScript landing page hosts a range of resources to support health practitioners in accessing and navigating QScript and understanding their legislative requirements in relation to using QScript. Visit www.qscript.health.qld.gov.au

3.3 Clinical support

> Please note that the **Monitored Medicines and Compliance Unit** and the **QScript technical support team** cannot provide clinical advice about the treatment of patients with monitored medicines.

In circumstances where clinical advice is required in relation to a specific patient, you may wish to discuss the case with a professional colleague, professional body and/or make contact with your professional indemnity provider for further advice (ensuring to comply with any relevant privacy or patient consent requirements).

Additionally, although not delivered by the Monitored Medicines and Compliance Unit, Queensland Health continues to offer clinical support to health professionals via the Alcohol and Drug Clinical Advisory Service (ADCAS) which is a specialist telephone support service for health professionals in Queensland, providing clinical advice regarding the management of patients with alcohol and other drug concerns. This free state-wide service is available from 8.00am-11.00pm, 7 days a week and is delivered by Metro North Hospital and Health Service: https://adis.health.qld.gov.au/health-professionals/adcas

To access alcohol and other drug training, education, clinical resources and practice advice, visit Insight: Centre for alcohol and other drug training and workforce development.

3.4 Regulatory support and other non-technical queries

- You can visit the Queensland Health website for information about:
  - prescribing monitored medicines
  - the Queensland Opioid Treatment Program
  - prescribing approvals
  - Queensland Health's approach to compliance monitoring and enforcement of medicines offences
  - the MPA regulatory framework
- A comprehensive range of fact sheets, templates and supporting documents is also available to assist you in understanding your regulatory requirements.
- For any other regulatory or other non-technical enquiries please email the Monitored Medicines and Compliance Unit: MMCU@health.qld.gov.au

4 Contact

Monitored Medicines and Compliance Unit

MMCU@health.qld.gov.au

5 Version control

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	27 Jul 2023	—
2.0	21 Jun 2024	Document updated to include references to changes to look-up requirements from July 2024 and guidance on use of QScript when practising in states/territories other than Queensland.