

Information pack

Becoming an authorised voluntary
assisted dying practitioner



Queensland
Government

Introduction

Voluntary assisted dying gives eligible people diagnosed with a life-limiting condition who are dying and suffering an additional end-of-life choice by allowing them to choose the timing and circumstances of their death.

To enable safe, high-quality, compassionate access to voluntary assisted dying, Queensland Health invites applications from interested:

- **medical practitioners** to participate in Queensland's voluntary assisted dying scheme as coordinating, consulting, and administering practitioners
- **nurse practitioners** and **registered nurses** to participate in Queensland's voluntary assisted dying scheme as administering practitioners.

This information pack provides information for prospective applicants, including:

- [a summary of practitioner roles](#)
- [eligibility requirements](#)
- [how to apply](#).

More information about the voluntary assisted dying scheme and background to the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021](#) (the Act) is available on the [Queensland Health website](#).

There is no closing date for applications.

Queensland Health welcomes applications year-round.

Authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners

There are three key roles in Queensland's voluntary assisted dying process which are collectively referred to as 'authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners':

- coordinating practitioner
- consulting practitioner
- administering practitioner.

Practitioners who have been verified to meet eligibility requirements, have successfully completed mandatory training, and have received authorisation by Queensland Health are able to undertake these roles.

Before applying, you should consider whether you meet eligibility requirements and have the knowledge and skills to undertake the functions of the roles.

Coordinating practitioner

The coordinating practitioner is responsible for coordinating the voluntary assisted dying process for a person. Only medical practitioners can undertake this role. The role has clinical and administrative responsibilities. Key functions include:

- coordinating the voluntary assisted dying process for a person
- acting as the primary voluntary assisted dying clinical contact for the person
- conducting the first eligibility assessment
- prescribing the voluntary assisted dying substance
- acting as the administering practitioner (as a default, if the person makes a practitioner administration decision, however this role can be transferred to another eligible medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse).

Consulting practitioner

The consulting practitioner is responsible for undertaking an independent assessment of the person's eligibility for voluntary assisted dying after the first assessment has occurred. This is called the consulting assessment. Only medical practitioners can undertake this role.

Administering practitioner

Under the Act, the default method of administration is self-administration. In these cases, there is no administering practitioner.

The administering practitioner role is only relevant where a person has made a practitioner administration decision, i.e., the substance will be administered by a practitioner. This is possible in specific circumstances. Medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses can undertake this role.

The administering practitioner is:

- by default (and in most cases), the coordinating practitioner for the person (medical practitioner only), OR
- a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse to whom the role of administering practitioner has been transferred by the coordinating practitioner.

For nurse practitioners and registered nurses who wish to apply to become authorised to act as an administering practitioner, please note: the coordinating practitioner will undertake the role of the administering practitioner unless they transfer the role to you.

Key functions include:

- administration of the voluntary assisted dying substance to the person
- disposal of any unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance.

Practitioner eligibility requirements

Practitioner eligibility to participate as an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner is defined in [Part 5](#) of the Act. Additional eligibility requirements are approved by the Director-General of Queensland Health under ss.161-163 of the Act.

Medical practitioner requirements

To be eligible to participate in voluntary assisted dying in Queensland as a coordinating, consulting, and administering practitioner, you must:

- hold **specialist registration only** and have practised for at least one year as the holder of specialist registration, OR
- hold **general registration only** and have practised for at least five years as the holder of general registration, OR
- hold **specialist registration and general registration** and have practised for at least five (5) years as the holder of general registration.

Overseas trained specialist eligibility

An overseas trained specialist without general or specialist registration must hold:

- limited registration with a sub-type of:
 - area of need – Specialist Pathway, OR
 - post graduate training or supervised practice – Specialist Pathway – Specialist Recognition, OR
- provisional registration as an international medical graduate eligible for the competent authority pathway as an overseas-trained specialist.

You must also have:

- completed at least 12 months working in a supervised position in Australia and met the approved supervised practice plan arrangements, AND
- at least 5 years of experience practicing as a specialist overseas or in Australia, AND
- undergone formal assessment by the relevant Australian college.

Additionally, all medical practitioners must:

- have completed the approved training (also referred to as the voluntary assisted dying mandatory training)
- have clinically practised twice the minimum hours per registration period¹ described in the [Registration Standard: Recency of Practice](#) published by the Medical Board of Australia. This must include a relevant scope of clinical practice, including experience in caring for people towards the end of life, patient assessment, and clinical decision-making; applicants who do not meet these criteria but can demonstrate comparable experience may be considered at the discretion of the Chief Medical Officer
- declare, for consideration by the Chief Medical Officer:
 - any notations, conditions, undertakings, or reprimands on their Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority registration record which make the practitioner unsuitable to undertake roles under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* as determined by the Director-General (or delegate)
 - any current or previous substantiated claims, complaints or adverse findings made against them by a registration authority and/or ethical standards/regulatory complaints authority, or any other professional, disciplinary, or similar bodies including those outside Australia which make the practitioner unsuitable to undertake roles under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* as determined by the Director-General (or delegate)
 - any physical or other medical conditions, including substance abuse, which may limit the medical practitioner's ability to undertake the role of coordinating practitioner, consulting practitioner, or administering practitioner in accordance with the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*
 - any disclosable criminal convictions, i.e., convictions as an adult that form part of the medical practitioner's criminal history and which have not been rehabilitated under the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*
 - they have professional indemnity insurance, which may be through an employer.

Nursing requirements

Nurse practitioners and registered nurses can participate in Queensland's voluntary assisted dying scheme as administering practitioners.

An administering practitioner will only be involved when a person has made a practitioner administration decision. Administering practitioners are responsible for administering the voluntary assisted dying substance to the person. This can occur in a range of settings, including the person's home, a public or private hospital or residential aged care. They are also responsible for disposing of any unused or remaining substance.

¹ Medical practitioners must have clinically practiced for a minimum of 8 weeks full-time equivalent in 12 months (304 hours), or 24 weeks full-time equivalent over 36 months (912 hours). Full-time equivalent is 38 hours per week. The maximum number of hours that can be counted per week is 38 hours.

The coordinating practitioner (a medical practitioner) is by default the administering practitioner. The role can be transferred to another eligible medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse. However, in most cases, **the coordinating practitioner will undertake the role of the administering practitioner.**

Please consider this when deciding if you wish to apply to become authorised to act as an administering practitioner.

Nurse practitioners

To be eligible to participate in voluntary assisted dying in Queensland as an **administering practitioner**, you must:

- have practiced as a **nurse practitioner** for at least one year
- hold registration endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner in the Division/Registration Type - Registered Nurse (Division 1).

Registered nurses

To be eligible to participate in voluntary assisted dying in Queensland as an **administering practitioner**, you must:

- have practiced as **registered nurse** for at least five (5) years
- hold registration in the Division/Registration Type - Registered Nurse (Division 1).

Additionally, all nurse practitioners and registered nurses must:

- have completed the approved training (also referred to as the voluntary assisted dying mandatory training)
- have clinically practised twice the minimum hours per registration period² described in the [Registration Standard: Recency of Practice](#) published by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. This must include a relevant scope of clinical practice, including experience in caring for people towards the end of life, patient assessment and clinical decision-making; applicants who do not meet these criteria but can demonstrate comparable experience may be considered at the discretion of the Chief Medical Officer
- declare, for consideration by the Chief Medical Officer:
 - any notations, conditions, undertakings, or reprimands on their Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (Ahpra) registration record which make the nurse practitioner or registered nurse unsuitable to undertake roles under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* as determined by the Director-General (or delegate)
 - any current or previous substantiated claims, complaints or adverse findings made against them by a registration authority and/or ethical standards/regulatory complaints authority, or any other professional, disciplinary, or similar bodies including those outside Australia which make the practitioner unsuitable to undertake roles under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* as determined by the Director-General (or delegate)

² The current standard states: 450 hours within the past 5 years, for both clinical and non-clinical practice roles for nurses and midwives.

- any physical or other medical conditions, including substance abuse, which may limit the nurse practitioner or registered nurse's ability to undertake the role of administering practitioner in accordance with the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021*
- any disclosable criminal convictions i.e., convictions as an adult that form part of the nurse practitioner or registered nurse's criminal history and which have not been rehabilitated under the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*
- they have professional indemnity insurance, which may be through an employer.

Indemnity

It is a requirement of professional registration that all registered health practitioners must have professional indemnity insurance. It is also an eligibility requirement to provide voluntary assisted dying services in Queensland. For more information about professional indemnity and voluntary assisted dying, please refer to the [Fact sheet: Practitioner indemnity](#) on the Queensland Health website.

Mandatory training

Successful completion of mandatory training is a requirement of participation in voluntary assisted dying. Queensland Health has partnered with the [Australian Centre for Health Law Research](#) at the Queensland University of Technology to develop the mandatory training, with valuable input from medical, nursing, and allied health stakeholders.

Authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners must be able to undertake functions of the roles independently and autonomously. Building on existing clinical skills, the mandatory training:

- introduces practitioners to the legal framework for voluntary assisted dying in Queensland
- provides the core knowledge required to participate in voluntary assisted dying
- consists of nine modules of content on a range of relevant topics
- takes approximately 6-8 hours to complete
- includes an assessment component—the practitioner must pass the assessment with a score of 90 per cent or more in up to five attempts
- is CPD-accredited with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.



Authorised practitioner participation

Scope of participation

Authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners can participate to the extent of their preferences and availability. Practitioners may:

- be available to travel to provide services to people across Queensland
- participate in eligibility assessments as a coordinating or consulting practitioner, but not prescribe or administer the voluntary assisted dying substance (for medical practitioners only)
- nurse practitioners and registered nurses can undertake the role of administering practitioner when it has been transferred to them by a coordinating practitioner (medical practitioner)
- provide voluntary assisted dying services only to a patient or patients with whom they have an existing therapeutic relationship
- provide voluntary assisted dying services in specific geographic areas
- provide voluntary assisted dying services to people with a specific diagnosis
- provide services within the context of their employment
- provide services on a private basis outside of their employment
- temporarily or permanently change or cease their availability at any time.

Following authorisation by the Chief Medical Officer, a staff member from the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service will contact the practitioner to determine the extent of their participation and availability.

Remuneration

The charging of fees for services is a matter for individual practitioners, to be undertaken in a manner compliant with, and in consideration of, relevant existing frameworks and guidance (for example, Medicare Benefits Schedule, Registration Board Codes of Conduct, etc).

Support available

Caring for people at the end of life can be extremely rewarding, and also emotionally challenging. Practitioners must navigate the needs and expectations of people accessing voluntary assisted dying, families, carers, and colleagues, and manage their own reactions to, and experiences of, death and dying. Providing compassionate and person-centred care in the context of voluntary assisted dying may raise new and different challenges.

Supports available for authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners include:

- the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Community of Practice, a virtual forum⁹ for authorised practitioners to continually improve their practice and grow their understanding of the voluntary assisted dying service through:
 - interactions with peers—ongoing virtual and online chat discussions

- structured education—regular development sessions on specialised topics
- interactive case-based discussions—test your thinking with other authorised practitioners
- webinars—stay up to date with current resources and support
- mentoring—connecting you with experienced practitioners across the health industry
- psychosocial support—counselling and debriefing to support you a practitioner self-care module in the mandatory training
- access to the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service as sources of knowledge, expertise, and support
- strategies detailed in the [voluntary assisted dying support and wellbeing framework](#)
- links with existing medical, nursing, and employer support programs.

Recognition and acceptance of practitioner authorisation

Entities can accept Queensland Health's authorisation process and are not required to undertake local credentialing of employees or external practitioners providing voluntary assisted dying services in a facility. However, an entity may undertake an additional due diligence or credentialing process for authorised practitioners, subject to local policies and procedures. If an entity decides to implement a local credentialing process, then the process must meet the requirements of the Act, including to allow reasonable access by practitioners to a facility.

The minimum requirements for an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner to be recognised and accepted by an entity to provide services within a relevant facility include:

- on request, providing a copy of their letter of authorisation or voluntary assisted dying card, which demonstrates they have been authorised by the Queensland Health Chief Medical Officer to provide voluntary assisted dying services, to the entity
- adhering to the entity's local approval/credentialling process, if relevant
- adhering to the entity's notification of visit process, if relevant.

It is recommended practitioners contact the entity prior to entry to confirm processes and requirements. The Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service can also provide assistance.

Protections for practitioners

Protections from liability are included in [Part 10](#) of the Act to provide clarity and certainty for people who may act under, or interact with, the legislation.

The Act contains protections for:

- assisting a person to access voluntary assisted dying
- being present when a person accesses voluntary assisted dying
- performing roles and functions under the Act without negligence
- not administering life-sustaining treatment to a person who has accessed voluntary assisted dying.

These protections generally apply when a person is acting '**in good faith**': that is, they are acting in a way which they honestly believe falls within the general purpose of the Act. They are designed to protect healthcare workers and others from criminal liability or civil actions (for example, for breach of the duty of care), which would otherwise arise if a person assisted someone to die.

More information about protections and offences is available in the [Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Handbook](#).

Personal information

Personal information will be treated as confidential and will only be used or accessed by authorised persons for the purposes connected with your current application.

Personal information collected by the Queensland Health is handled in accordance with the [Information Privacy Act 2009](#). The personal information provided by you will be securely stored and made available only to appropriately authorised officers. Personal information recorded on this form will not be disclosed to other parties without your consent, unless required by law.

Personal information may be disclosed as part of the practitioner verification process—for example, when contacting referees. Names and details of authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners will never be published on the Queensland Health website or shared without your consent.

A facility may contact Queensland Health to validate the authorisation status of a voluntary assisted dying practitioner. Queensland Health will only confirm your full name, Ahpra registration, and authorisation status if the facility provides your unique identification number. Queensland Health will not release any details if the facility does not provide your unique identification number.

How to apply

The process to become an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner in Queensland is detailed in the table below.

Applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their application at regular intervals. However, prospective applicants should note the practitioner authorisation process may take an extended period of time. This timeframe can be reduced upon request in exceptional circumstances—for example, where the person requesting access to voluntary assisted dying is at risk of imminent death or losing decision-making capacity.

Authorisation process

Step	Actions
Step 1: Application	<p>Applicants must submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a completed application form via QVAD Review Board IMS• a current Curriculum Vitae that includes enough detail to demonstrate that the practitioner meets the requirements related to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– years of clinical practice at the relevant registration and practice type– hours of clinical practice that meet the eligibility requirements specific to medical or nursing– recent and relevant clinical practice, including experience in caring for people towards the end of life, patient assessment and clinical decision-making³• current Ahpra registration status including details of any conditions, undertakings, reprimands, or notations within the past five years• current details of two professional referees, with no conflict of interest, who can attest to the practitioner's eligibility within the past 12 months, who will be contacted by the Voluntary Assisted Dying Program Unit as part of the verification process—at least one of these referees must be a clinician• copy of relevant base degree and specialist qualifications / Fellowship / Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) / other relevant postgraduate education• a declaration that the practitioner holds appropriate professional indemnity insurance for the provision of voluntary assisted dying services in Queensland, including certificate of currency (if requested)• three forms of identification (including at least one form of photo ID). <p>The practitioner must also complete a declaration as part of their application.</p> <p>The Voluntary Assisted Dying Program Unit will receive the practitioner's application and supporting documents.</p>
Step 2: Verification	<p>After the practitioner has submitted the application and other supporting information, Queensland Health will complete a verification process.</p> <p>The purpose of this process is to verify with relevant individuals, external organisations, and nominated referees the validity of all claims made in the practitioner's application, and to determine whether the practitioner meets the eligibility requirements to provide voluntary assisted dying services in Queensland.</p> <p>All complete applications will be reviewed by the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Practitioner Eligibility Panel, which is established to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• consider the eligibility of applicants through a peer review model

³ Applicants who do not meet these criteria but can demonstrate comparable experience may be considered at the discretion of the Director-General (or delegate).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide recommendations to endorse or not endorse applications to Queensland Health's Chief Medical Officer, who is the decision-maker in relation to approval of eligibility and authorisation of voluntary assisted dying practitioners. <p>Applicants may be required to participate in a face-to-face or virtual screening conversation and/or provide additional information as required.</p>
Step 3: Mandatory training	<p>Once verified, the practitioner will be given access to the mandatory training. This is delivered via iLearn, an online learning management system.</p> <p>The practitioner is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete the mandatory training modules successfully pass the assessment confirm receipt and understanding of the <i>Voluntary Assisted Dying Prescription and Administration Protocols</i> which will be sent to the practitioner via post.
Step 4: Authorisation	<p>After the practitioner has confirmed receipt and understanding of the <i>Voluntary Assisted Dying Prescription and Administration Protocols</i> and made all declarations, the Voluntary Assisted Dying Program Unit will undertake a final review to ensure all components of the authorisation process have been completed.</p> <p>If there are no concerns, the practitioner will be authorised by Queensland Health's Chief Medical Officer as an authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner. The practitioner will receive, in writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation of the Chief Medical Officer's authorisation letter of authorisation unique authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioner identifier Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Support and Pharmacy Service welcome pack a voluntary assisted dying ID card (optional). <p>The practitioner will be authorised to provide voluntary assisted dying services in Queensland for a period of three years, unless the practitioner becomes ineligible—for example, where their registration may have lapsed, or they have a new notification recorded against their registration. An authorisation renewal process can be undertaken at the end of the three-year period.</p> <p>Authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners will also be granted access to the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board Information Management System (QVAD Review Board IMS).</p>

Further information

If you require more information, please contact Queensland Health's Voluntary Assisted Dying Program Unit via email for confidential advice or a discussion: VADUnit@health.qld.gov.au or visit the [Queensland Health website](#).