

GUIDE TO PARTICIPATING IN THE AGED CARE ON-SITE PHARMACIST PROGRAM

Information for residential aged care homes

The Aged Care On-site Pharmacist (ACOP) Measure responds to the 2021 final report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. It aims to improve medication management and safety for residents by supporting credentialed pharmacists to work on site as part of the care team in residential aged care homes (RACHs).

From 1 July 2026, all pharmacists providing ACOP services must have completed an Australian Pharmacy Council (APC)-accredited aged care on-site pharmacist training program, in addition to holding the Medication Management Review (MMR) credential.

The ACOP program is a best practice alternative to the Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR) and Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) programs. Where an ACOP is engaged to work in a RACH, that RACH cannot also receive RMMR or QUM services.

Choosing the right pathway: Tier 1 or Tier 2

Residential aged care homes seeking to engage an on-site pharmacist should first approach a community pharmacy.

Pathway	How it works	When to use this pathway
Tier 1	The RACH partners with a Section 90 community pharmacy that employs an ACOP to work in the RACH.	This is the first pathway a RACH should attempt.
Tier 2	The RACH applies for funding to engage the ACOP directly.	This pathway is only available after the RACH has made an unsuccessful attempt to source an ACOP through Tier 1.

Note: The RACH must keep a record of any unsuccessful attempt to access an ACOP through a community pharmacy and provide these details in its Tier 2 application. Details include the pharmacy name, pharmacy owner or manager name, pharmacy phone number and email, and date of contact.

Murray PHN can assist RACHs to identify an eligible pharmacy and/or appropriately credentialed pharmacist to participate via Tier 1 or Tier 2. Email agedcare@murrayphn.org.au for assistance.



Engaging an on-site pharmacist via Tier 1

After successfully identifying an ACOP through a community pharmacy under Tier 1, the RACH and pharmacy should complete the following steps.

Step 1: Establish service agreement details

RACH and ACOP/pharmacy to discuss and agree days of onsite work and start date. Service agreement to be developed (following the RACH's usual process) outlining services to be delivered in alignment with the Australian Pharmacy Council's [Indicative-Role-Description.pdf](#) and the Pharmacy Program Administrator (PPA) list of accepted activities that the ACOP can undertake:

<https://www.ppaonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Example-ACOP-activities.docx>.

Step 2: Termination notice to current RMMR/QUM/ACOP service provider (if applicable)

RACH to provide at least 30 days written notice to the current RMMR/QUM/ACOP service provider of intention to cease services.

Step 3: Complete Tier 1 service authorisation

The pharmacy should provide the ACOP Tier 1 form to the RACH. The template form can be found here: [Service-Authorisation-Tier-1.pdf](#)

As part of the Tier 1 service authorisation form the RACH will need to provide:

- RACH details including NAPS ID
- confirmation and date that the RACH provided at least 30 days' notice of termination to existing service providers (e.g. RMMR/ QUM/ACOP). Note filling in the application does not constitute notice of termination to the existing service provider
- signature of RACH manager and RACH head office.

The Pharmacy is responsible for completion of the remaining fields on the form and submitting to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA).

Step 4: Register for the ACOP Measure and register a RACH relationship

The pharmacy is to register for the ACOP Measure and register a RACH relationship (i.e. register an aged care home for the ACOP Measure) and upload the completed and signed service authorisation via the PPA portal. Instructions can be found on pages 3-5 of the [ACOP-Measure-Tier-1-Pharmacy-Portal-User-Guide.pdf](#)

Step 5: Approval of service authorisation

Once approval of the ACOP Tier 1 service authorisation has been granted by the PPA (applications are usually assessed within three business days), the ACOP can start.

An ACOP can only work on-site under the Measure on or after the start date listed in the PPA portal against the approved application.

Once notice to terminate has been provided to the current RMMR/QUM/ACOP service provider, there may be some duplication of ACOP services and RMMR/QUM services during the period of notice.

Step 6: Start and onboarding of ACOP

- The integration of the ACOP will take time to establish. To support successful integration of this role into the RACH, the following resources are available on the [Murray PHN ACOP webpage](https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Letter-templates-Introduction-to-ACOP-role.docx):
 - Introductory letter templates for residents/families, staff, other health professionals: <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Letter-templates-Introduction-to-ACOP-role.docx>
 - Meet your pharmacist poster template: <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Meet-Your-Onsite-Pharmacist-poster.docx>
 - Orientation checklist: <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/ACOP-Orientation-Checklist-fillable.pdf>
- The activities completed by the ACOP must be within the scope of the ACOP role description: [Indicative-Role-Description.pdf](#)
- The PPA provides a list of accepted activities that the ACOP can undertake: <https://www.ppaonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Example-ACOP-activities.docx>.
- Discuss and set priorities and goals with the ACOP based on the needs and requirements of the RACH.

Step 7: Weekly timesheets completed by ACOP and signed by RACH

The ACOP will need to complete a weekly timesheet and activities summary and have this signed by the RACH representative. These timesheets will be used by the pharmacy to submit the claim to the PPA and may be required as documentary evidence in case of audit by the PPA.

- Timesheet template: [ACOP-Weekly-Timesheet-and-Activities-Summary-Template.pdf](#)
- Example completed timesheet: [Completed-Example-ACOP-Weekly-Timesheet.pdf](#)

Step 8: Pharmacy submits monthly claim to PPA

The pharmacy is responsible for submitting the ACOP Tier 1 monthly claim via the PPA portal to access funds for payment of the ACOP salary.

Further information

Further information including Tier 1 program rules, can be found at:

[Aged Care On-site Pharmacist \(ACOP\) Measure Tier 1 - Community Pharmacy claims and receives payments - Pharmacy Programs Administrator](#)

Engaging an on-site pharmacist via Tier 2

After an unsuccessful attempt to engage an ACOP through a community pharmacy under Tier 1, the RACH can identify an appropriately credentialed pharmacist to engage directly as an ACOP via the Tier 2 pathway. Once an ACOP has been identified, the RACH should complete the following steps.

Step 1: Establish model of engagement

RACH to discuss and agree arrangements for engaging the ACOP either as a full-time, part-time, casual employee or under contract, and agree start date. Develop a position description and/or service agreement in line with the Australian Pharmacy Council's [Indicative-Role-Description.pdf](#) and the Pharmacy Program Administrator's list of accepted activities that the ACOP can undertake:

<https://www.ppaonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Example-ACOP-activities.docx>

Step 2: Set up user and service provider account

RACH needs to create a new user account and service provider account in the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) portal. This needs to be completed by an authorised employee of the RACH who will have overall control and ability to modify details such as the RACH bank details for payment.

See the section titled **Applying and Claiming for the Measure** in: [Aged Care On-site Pharmacist \(ACOP\) Measure Tier 2 - RACH claims and receives payments - Pharmacy Programs Administrator](#)

The PPA portal user guide contains instructions for setting up a user account and registering for a role (pages 4-9), for linking your role to an existing service provider account (page 10) or to a new service provider account (page 12-13): [ACOP-Measure-Tier-2-RACH-Portal-User-Guide.pdf](#)

Step 3: Termination notice to current RMMR/QUM/ACOP service provider (if applicable)

Provide at least 30 days written notice to the current RMMR/QUM/ACOP service provider of intention to cease services.

Step 4: Complete Tier 2 application form

Once the service provider account has been created and approved in the PPA portal then an application for Tier 2 ACOP funding can be completed.

The application form can be found here: [ACOP-Tier-2-RACH-Application-Form.pdf](#)

As part of the Tier 2 application form the RACH will need to provide:

- details of the unsuccessful attempt to engage an ACOP through the Tier 1 community pharmacy pathway, including pharmacy name, pharmacy owner or manager name, pharmacy phone number and email and date of contact
- confirmation and date that the RACH provided at least 30 days' notice of termination to existing service providers, such as RMMR or QUM providers. Note completing the application does not constitute notice of termination to the existing service provider
- the name of the intended ACOP and their credential number.

Step 5: Submit Tier 2 application form

The completed Tier 2 RACH application form needs to be submitted under the RACH service provider's account in the PPA portal.

Instructions for submitting the application via the PPA portal can be found on page 18 of the [ACOP-Measure-Tier-2-RACH-Portal-User-Guide.pdf](#)

Step 6: Approval of application form

Once the ACOP Tier 2 RACH application form has been approved by the PPA (applications are usually assessed within three business days), the ACOP can start. An ACOP can only work on-site under the Measure on or after the start date listed in the PPA portal against the approved application. Once notice to terminate has been provided to current provider, there may be some duplication of ACOP services and RMMR/QUM services during the period of notice.

Step 7: Start and onboarding of ACOP

- The integration of the ACOP will take time to establish. To support successful integration of this role into the RACH, the following resources are available on the [Murray PHN ACOP webpage](https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Letter-templates_-_Introduction-to-ACOP-role.docx):
 - Introductory letter templates for residents/families, staff, other health professionals: https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Letter-templates_-_Introduction-to-ACOP-role.docx
 - Meet your pharmacist poster template: <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Meet-Your-Onsite-Pharmacist-poster.docx>
 - Orientation checklist: <https://murrayphn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/ACOP-Orientation-Checklist-fillable.pdf>
- The activities completed by the ACOP must be within the scope of the ACOP role description: [Indicative-Role-Description.pdf](#)
- The PPA provides a list of accepted activities that the ACOP can undertake: <https://www.ppaonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Example-ACOP-activities.docx>
- Discuss and set priorities and goals with the ACOP based on the needs and requirements of the RACH.

Step 8: Weekly timesheets completed by ACOP and submitted to RACH for signature

The ACOP will need to complete a weekly timesheet and submit to the approved RACH representative for signature. These timesheets will be used to submit the claim to the PPA. Keep these timesheets as documentary evidence in case of audit by the PPA.

- Timesheet template: [ACOP-Weekly-Timesheet-and-Activities-Summary-Template.pdf](#)
- Example completed timesheet: [Completed-Example-ACOP-Weekly-Timesheet.pdf](#)

Step 9: RACH submits monthly claim to PPA

Instructions for submitting the ACOP Tier 2 monthly claim via the PPA portal can be found on page 20 of the [ACOP-Measure-Tier-2-RACH-Portal-User-Guide.pdf](#)

To submit the claim, you will need the following information:

- name and AHPRA number of the ACOP who worked on site at the RACH during the month being claimed
- number of days the ACOP worked in the month being claimed, based on the completed timesheets
- how the pharmacist was engaged by the RACH
- if more than one ACOP worked on site, the additional pharmacist's details and days worked
- confirmation that the pharmacist(s) worked a minimum of half-day shifts and to a regular schedule.

Further information

Further information including Tier 2 program rules, how to apply and claim payments can be found here: [Aged Care On-site Pharmacist \(ACOP\) Measure Tier 2 - RACH claims and receives payments - Pharmacy Programs Administrator](#)