Writing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescriptions

This document should be used as a guide only. The Department of Human Services (Human Services) recommends health professionals exercise their own skill and care with respect to its contents. It is intended that the checklist is used together with other professionally recognised dispensing practice guidelines.

Authorised optometrists

The PBS is a system of subsidising the cost of many prescription medicines. The subsidies are available to all Australian residents and eligible foreign visitors.

Eligible veterans, war widows and dependants are entitled to medicines through the RPBS which is administered by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA).

PBS medicines you are able to prescribe as an authorised optometrist are listed in the optometrist section of the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits (the Schedule).

**Note:** The list of optometrist medicine currently does not include any Authority required (STREAMLINED) PBS Prescriptions.

It is important to prescribe within the terms of your prescribing accreditation and in accordance with your state or territory legislation.

You must also ensure your patient satisfies PBS/RPBS entitlement requirements and meets eligibility criteria in the Schedule for supply of the medicine under the PBS.

You can use your standard prescription form, or a computer-generated PBS/RPBS prescription form to write:
- a PBS unrestricted prescription
- a PBS authority prescription
- a non-PBS or private prescription.

The medicine you can prescribe differs between states and territories. Before writing a prescription for PBS or non-PBS medicines, you must check the list of medicines applicable for optometrist prescribers in your state or territory.

There are three broad categories of pharmaceutical benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unrestricted</strong></td>
<td>Medicine that can be prescribed through the PBS without PBS restrictions on therapeutic use. The uses for the medicine are in accordance with the TGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted</strong></td>
<td>Medicine that can be prescribed through the PBS only if the prescriber is satisfied that the patient’s clinical condition matches the therapeutic uses listed in the Schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authority</strong></td>
<td>Authority listed medicine falls into two categories: Authority required—restricted medicine that requires prior approval from Human Services or the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA). Authority required (STREAMLINED)—restricted medicine that does not require prior approval, but must have the relevant streamlined authority code included on the prescription.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also Authority required (STREAMLINED) restricted medicines that do not require prior approval from Human Services or DVA, but must have the relevant streamlined authority code included on the prescription. These medicines are identified in the Schedule as Authority required (STREAMLINED).
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**PBS/RPBS unrestricted prescriptions**

**Example 1:** Handwritten unrestricted prescription

**Example 2:** Computer generated unrestricted prescription

1. Your name and the name, address and telephone number of your practice (not just a mobile phone number).
2. Your prescriber number.
3. Your patient’s name and residential address (do not use a post office box number).
4. Tick the box that is relevant to your patient’s entitlement status: PBS or RPBS.
5. Name, strength and form of medicine—only one item per prescription.
6. Instructions for use—provide clear directions.
7. Quantity and number of repeats—no abbreviations.
8. Your signature.
9. Date prescription is written (forward or back dating is not allowed).
10. If appropriate, tick ‘Brand substitution not permitted’ box.
11. Medicare, concession and veterans’ card numbers.

**Important:** you must adhere to state/territory legislation.
You must obtain prior approval from Human Services or DVA for all Authority required listed medicine, unless it is an Authority required (STREAMLINED) medicine. Prior approval is also required from Human Services or DVA for increased quantities and/or additional repeats, above those specified in the Schedule.

1. Authority prescription number—used by the pharmacy as a reference when dispensing medicine on an authority approved prescription, and for repeats of that prescription.

2. Authority approval number—given by Human Services or DVA, or the streamlined authority code, which must be included on the prescription.
Non-PBS prescriptions (Private prescriptions)

Example 5: Handwritten non-PBS prescription

You must write a non-PBS prescription to prescribe:

• outside the PBS restrictions—when your patient’s clinical condition does not match the uses listed in the Schedule
• a quantity exceeding the maximum PBS quantity without an approved authority
• a number of repeats exceeding the maximum number of repeats without an approved authority
• a medicine not listed on the Schedule
• for a patient not entitled to PBS medicines
• a medicine outside its PBS manner of administration (for example, a PBS eye ointment for topical non-ophthalmic use).

The standard or computerised PBS prescription form may be used to write a non-PBS prescription. However, you must cross out the PBS/RPBS boxes and endorse the prescription as ‘non-PBS’ as shown in the examples above.

Example 6: Computer generated non-PBS prescription

Important: The medicine an optometrist may prescribe differs between states and territories. Before writing a prescription for a PBS or non-PBS medicine, you must check the list of medicine applicable for optometrist prescribers in your state or territory.

For more information

Call 132 290* General PBS and stationery enquiries
1800 888 333* PBS authority prescription approvals
1800 552 580* RPBS authority prescription approvals
Online pbs.gov.au
humanservices.gov.au/health professionals > Doing Business with Medicare > education services

*Call charges apply.