Powerchair training checklist

Prior to power wheelchair set up

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
No medical barriers to commence power wheelchair use		
Adequate sitting tolerance		
Postural MAT assessment completed to identify seating requirement		
AT assessment (general) and AT assessment (power wheelchair supplement) completed		
Power wheelchair checklist of predicted features		
Agreement around responsibilities for use of the chair		

General use of power wheelchair

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Turn chair on/off		
Adjust speed		
Access mode and other buttons		
Adjust tilt		
Adjust recline		
Adjust power lift		
Adjust power elevating leg rests		
Adjustment of specialty controls (e.g., swing away chin control)		
Operation of armrests		
Operation of leg rests and footplates		
Aware of how to check feet positioning in chair		
Aware of how to check postural alignment		
Awareness of how to engage/disengage from drive to manual mode		
Attendant control – how to switch to attendant mode and carer training		
Demonstrated knowledge of battery life/need for charging overnight		
Demonstrated understanding of drive lockouts e.g. tilt or elevation above threshold		

Indoor skills

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Adjust speed appropriately for situation		
Maintain straight line forwards		
Come to an abrupt stop		
Reverse in a straight line approx 1m		
Reverse into a tight space (lift, bedside)		
Turn corners without collision		
Avoid obstacles		
Manoeuvre through a chicane		
Manoeuvre through kitchen		
Manoeuvre through bathroom		
Manoeuvre under a table / bench / desk		
Approach tables / benches		
Operate doors		

Prior to use outdoors / community

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Adequate sitting tolerance for outdoor skills		
Postural securements e.g. chest strap		
Read power wheelchair road rules		
Demonstrated understanding by being able to repeat back road rules to clinician		
Taxi travel tips and securement rules		
Public transport tips		

Community skills - indoor

Crowds

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Select appropriate speeds for situation		
Use visual scanning to avoid collision		
Navigate crowds without collision		
Power Wheelchair Assessment completed		
Use assertive communication in crowds		

Lifts and doors

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Enter/exit lifts		
Operate lifts		
Open doors, if applicable		
Pass through automatic doors		

Ramps and camber

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Ascend and descend 1:14 ramp		
Ascend and descend a steep incline (≤ 1:8)		
Use tilt feature appropriately to accommodate for the gradient		

Community skills – outdoor

Pathways

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Navigate pathways with camber		
Navigate damaged pathways (eg tree roots, concrete cracks, potholes)		
Share a pathway		

Thresholds

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Navigate small thresholds up and down		

Terrain

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Drive on grass		
Drive on dirt/gravel/bark		
Drive on terrain with gaps e.g. decking		

Crossing roads

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Traverse kerbs without 'bottoming out' footplates or compromising balance		
Cross road - no signalling		
Cross road - pedestrian crossing		
Cross road - traffic lights		

Public transport

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Embark/disembark public transport		
Embark/disembark accessible taxi or van		
Communication with operator and other passengers as required, to advocate for reasonable assistance e.g. waiting until they are positioned in allocated space prior to		

moving away		
Posture, balance and stability whilst on board, including skin management e.g. minimising shear during movement		
Reliable access to ticket / pass, money, phone and water		
Temperature regulation management over long journeys or wait times		

Wet weather

Demonstrated understanding and ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Apply poncho or plastic bag over controller during wet weather, and seek shelter as soon as possible		

Breakdowns

Demonstrated ability to:	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
User has spare inner tubes for air-filled wheels		
Direct someone to apply the manual drive option to move the chair to safety		
User is aware of how to contact roadside assistance for flat tyres		
User has contact details for supplier in the event of breakdowns and is aware of time frames for service		

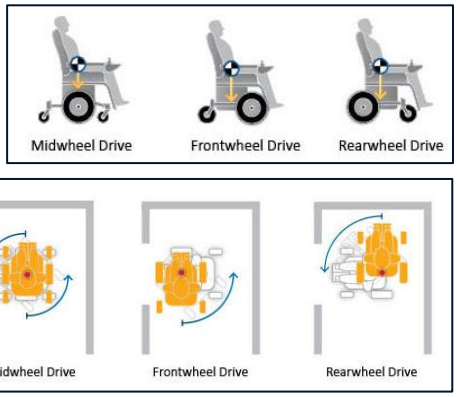
Supplier education checklist

	Date achieved	Comments re progress / further skill development required
Common trouble shooting issues, what to do in the event of a breakdown, contact details for supplier or agent in user's location, and likely response time for emergency repairs in user's location		
Frequency of servicing recommended and available agents in user's community		
Estimated distance that the charge will last, this will be dependent upon terrain, inclines travelled, weight of the user, and driving style e.g. speed and acceleration.		
Correct charging procedure (Commonly a full overnight charge every night)		

Clinician tips for teaching power wheelchair skills

Turning a corner

- Front wheel drive: Begin the turn as soon as you approach the corner
- Mid wheel drive: Begin the turn once the middle of the chair has moved past the corner
- Rear wheel drive: begin the turn once the rear of the chair has moved past the corner



source: Sunrise medical

Reversing

- When initiating reversing, the power wheelchair changes course from travelling forward to reversing and the small castors spin around 180degrees. This causes the chair to deviate slightly from its course, to the left or right depending on which way the castors spin.
- The power wheelchair user needs to anticipate this and compensate accordingly. To compensate, the user needs to push the joystick in the opposite direction to where they want to go, often associated with the skill of reversing a trailer in a car. This skill often requires repetitive practice.



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Ramps - descending

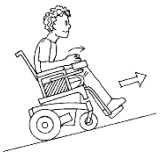
- When travelling down a ramp, tilting back and using a chest strap can assist to maintain trunk stability for those with limited trunk control.
- At the base of the ramp, be aware of the chair's ground to footplate clearance and tilt back to avoid footplates scraping



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Ramps - ascending

- The user can tilt the chair forward ("un-tilt") to prevent the chair tipping backward and to increase the efficiency of the chair



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Camber

- A camber is a sideways slope that is present on many walkways
- Many wheelchairs tend to veer downhill on a camber. The user needs to compensate for this.
- Some wheelchairs have in-built intuitive tracking correction that adjusts the drive wheels to compensate for camber and assist with maintaining a straight line.



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Outdoor and uneven terrain

- The user should continually look ahead to assess inconsistent and unpredictable terrain
- When negotiating terrain that has gaps e.g. decking, approach perpendicular to the planks to prevent casters getting stuck



Source: magic mobility

Small kerbs and lips

- Power wheelchairs are designed to travel over small lips, bumps, thresholds and small kerbs
- Check for sufficient footplate to ground clearance – tilt back if required
- Approach the threshold as perpendicular as possible - "straight on" so both casters cross the threshold at the same time
- Approach the threshold at a low speed, then gradually increase the speed as the front wheels contact the threshold



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Accessing a bench or table

- Assess position of legs to determine clearance under a table
- Use swing away or retractable joystick
- Approach side on-if necessary



Source: eLearnSCI :: Home

Doors

- There are multiple ways to open doors depending on space available around the door
- Videos available here http://www.elearnsci.org
- A reaching device to open the handle may assist.



Chin control

- Chin control joysticks are commonly configured with an inverse drive direction. That is, to drive forward, the person pushes the chin backward/down. This chin retrusion, commonly the easiest chin movement to be used for the most common driving direction (forward). However, this will need to be individualized following an assessment.
- An assessment is required to determine the most comfortable and preferred driving direction. This may be dependent on strength, range of motion, endurance and pain.



source: https://www.sunrisemedical.com.au/

Breakdown options include



- For punctured pneumatic tires, users can call roadside assistance
- User must carry their own for inner tubes
- Other strategies include asking for someone to disengage the chair (if safe to do so), manually push to a safe place to organise wheelchair accessible taxi home
- Some suppliers may be available for emergencies in metropolitan areas

www.Pushmobility.com.au

Wet weather



- Approach slippery terrain slowly
- Try to avoid using the power wheelchair if rain is predicted
- Carry a poncho or rain protection for the controller (such as a plastic bag) at all times

amazon

Driving at night



- Wear bright colours/reflective clothing
- Use the power wheelchair lights if available, or can attach bike lights and reflective tape

permobil

Registration

- Power wheelchairs must be registered for use in Queensland. Registration is free and includes compulsory third party insurance.

QLD Road Rules

Rules for motorised mobility device use | Transport and motoring | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)

The person in control of the motorised mobility device must

- Comply with road rules as they apply to pedestrians. Motorised mobility device uses are regarded as a pedestrian
- Be capable of safely operating the device
- Exercise due care and attention for the safety of others at all times
- Use the footpath or nature strips at all times,
- If the footpath or nature strip is unsuitable, travel as close as possible to the left or right side of the road. Users should also face oncoming traffic if possible to do so
- Cross a road by the shortest, safest route, not stay on the road longer than needed and use a crossing or lights where available
- Travel at a speed no faster than 10km per hour
- Not travel on the road alongside more than one other pedestrian or vehicle travelling on the road in the same direction, unless it is necessary to overtake other pedestrians

References

eLearnSCI :: Home

Home (Department of Transport and Main Roads) (tmr.qld.gov.au)

Powered Mobility Device Assessment Training Tool – PoMoDATT

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	2011	Glenda Price and OT students	Student project

2.0	2025	Emily Allan and Laura McCarthy	Formatting and removed SIU specificity
3.0	30/03/2026	Soo Oh	Amalgamated 2 versions of same document and applied QSCIS letterhead