ACE Repository for Clinical Guidelines: Requirements for Applicants

Version 1.0 Jan 2026

ACE
agency for
care effectiveness

Record of updates

Date	Version	Summary of main changes
29 Jan 2026	1.0	Publication of ACE Repository for Clinical Guidelines: Requirements for Applicants

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Introduction

Clinical guidelines are important knowledge tools that support decision-making. As the volume and complexity of medical evidence continues to grow, maintaining transparency, consistently high standards of quality and trustworthiness present important challenges for guideline developers. The Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE)'s vision is to empower local guideline developers with a robust framework for guideline development and in doing so, multiply efforts in creating high-quality guidelines that enhance appropriate care delivery and achieve the best health outcomes for patients. To this end, ACE launched:

- The Guidelines for Guidelines (G4G) in May 2025, establishing common, minimum quality criteria to support external (non-ACE) guideline developers who wish to produce their own evidence-based guidelines.
- The ACE Repository for Clinical Guidelines (ARCG) which provides a unified platform for accessing ACE Clinical Guidelines (ACGs) and other locally developed guidelines meeting G4G standards.

This document guides you through the process of applying for G4G methodological validation and ARCG inclusion. Validated guidelines receive the official 'Guidelines for Guidelines Method Validated' seal (Fig 1), enhancing credibility and adoption potential.

Fig 1. G4G seal

ACE's methodological validation is valid for 5 years unless guidelines are amended or updated during this period or otherwise specified. This validation confirms adherence to guideline development standards but does **not** endorse specific recommendations or content in guidelines.

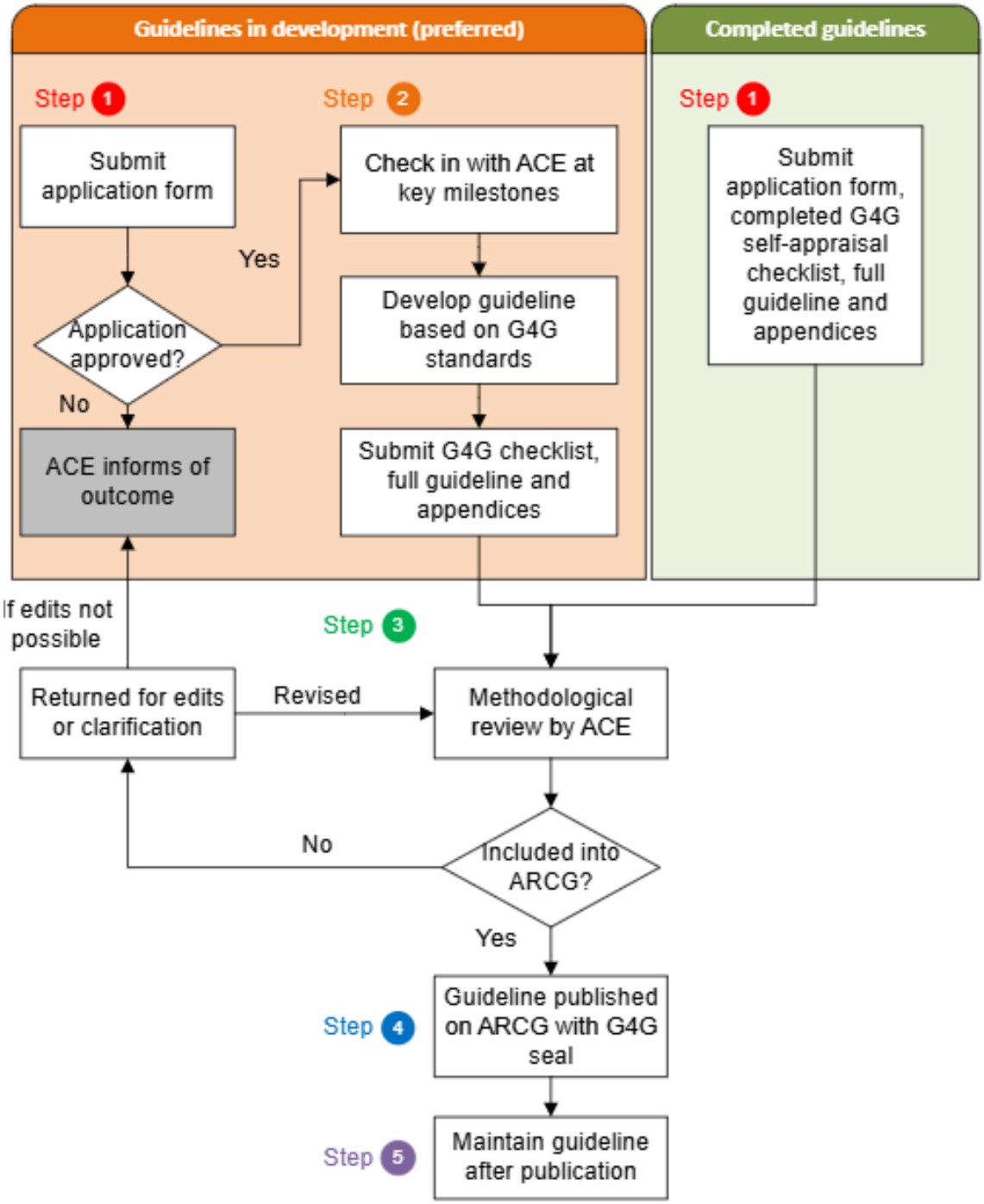
Important information for applicants

The ARCG is relevant for clinical guidelines that intend to meet G4G standards and apply for methodological review by ACE, MOH. While both ongoing and completed clinical guidelines can be submitted, applicants are encouraged to engage ACE early to maximise chances of successful publication into ARCG (see Overview of ARCG process for applicants).

The ARCG scope excludes:

- Consensus statements, clinical protocols, standard operating procedures, and other operational, administrative, regulatory, and research-type guidelines (as these follow different developmental methodologies)
- Guidelines associated with commercial interests (e.g. developed with industry support or involvement)
- Guidelines with the same scope of existing ACGs or ACGs in the pipeline. Proposed guidelines that overlap in scope with other non-ACE clinical guidelines (published in ARCG or in the ARCG pipeline) may also not be accepted.

Overview of ARCG process for applicants



ACE, Agency for Care Effectiveness; G4G, Guidelines for Guidelines; ARCG, ACE Repository for Clinical Guidelines

Step 1. Submit the application form

This first step enables ACE to assess your readiness to meet the G4G standards.

Guidelines in development	Submit this application form. This should be done preferably before starting any evidence work, allowing any methodological adjustments in a timely manner. Under this application track, developers invited to proceed will have the opportunity to check in with ACE staff on understanding of and alignment to G4G standards.
Completed guidelines	Submit this application form with the following: • Completed G4G self-appraisal checklist • Full guideline (including methods, evidence-to-recommendation framework, and evidence search strategies)

For completed guidelines, refer to Step 3 *Notification of outcome* for the next step.

Step 2. Develop your guideline after application approval

For guidelines in development, you will be notified of the application review outcome. If you receive an invitation to proceed:

Guidelines in development	ACE will organise a briefing session to clarify any aspects of the development process before you begin or progress further in your guideline work. Your guideline topic will be listed as "in development" on the ARCG webpage for transparency, helping inform other organisations of ongoing work and minimising duplication of efforts across the healthcare community. Check-in meetings with ACE can be scheduled at pre-specified milestones of guideline development, with timings tailored based on the individual guideline under review. As an example, there may be specific check-ins at the following stages: • ***Received ACE's invitation to proceed***: to introduce the G4G standards, validation process, and address early enquiries on guideline scoping, expert panel formation, and conflict of interest management. • ***Prior to commencing evidence synthesis***: to provide clarification on Evidence-to-Recommendation frameworks, systematic evidence synthesis and incorporating implementability features. • ***Prior to expert panel meeting***: to provide clarification on consensus methods and external review of guidelines. Throughout the guideline work, do refer to the G4G standards and G4G self-appraisal checklist (the latter will be the basis of ACE's final assessment).

For clarity on how ACE aims to support guideline developers throughout this phase, the roles and responsibilities are detailed below:

Guideline developers	ACE
Developers are responsible for: • Conducting methodological work independently • Managing the project timeline, process, and stakeholders • Maintaining communication with ACE on project status • Scheduling check-ins with ACE at key development milestones	ACE is responsible for: • Providing suggestions on alignment to G4G standards (as needed) • Providing check-ins at key development milestones • Where required, signposting you to relevant resources and organisations e.g. for in-depth training on technical aspects

Once the final guideline draft is completed and reviewed by independent external reviewers, please submit the following to ACE for methodology review:

- Full guideline (including methods, evidence-to-recommendation framework, and evidence search strategies)
- Completed G4G self-appraisal checklist

Step 3. Notification of outcome

A methodology review will be undertaken by an ACE staff who has not participated in previous meetings with the guideline group and quality-assured by a senior methodologist. Overall feedback from other MOH divisions may be sought as necessary, before the notification of outcome.

ACE will notify you of the outcome generally within 6-10 weeks from submission of completed documents (may vary depending on the guideline length and complexity).

Possible outcomes are:

- **Validated:** if the guideline is accepted into ARCG, the G4G seal will be granted and sent with brief instructions on placement at the front page of the guideline.
- **Returned for edits or clarifications:** if more information or revisions are needed, ACE will reassess the guideline after changes have been made.

Step 4. Publication of methodologically validated guidelines

Once accepted, you will have time to proofread the final copy of the guideline before publication on ARCG. If minor editorial changes to spelling, grammar, and formatting are made at this stage, they should be tracked for ACE's awareness; there should not be significant changes to the recommendation or content. ACE will notify you on the publication date in ARCG (with at least one week's lead time after receiving the final PDF).

The final decision to publish the guideline in the ARCG remains with MOH, subject to internal approval processes. Publication on ARCG does not preclude you from publishing the guideline on other websites or platforms.

Step 5. Maintenance after publication of guideline in the ARCG

As the guideline developer, you will maintain ongoing responsibility for managing and updating your published guideline, including addressing all enquiries regarding your guideline.

To ensure continued clinical relevance, you are also responsible for conducting evidence reviews at minimum five-yearly intervals and update the guidelines as needed to reflect clinical relevance and high-quality standards. Please notify ACE of any significant revisions so the ARCG can be updated accordingly.

Guidelines without updates after five years will be withdrawn from the repository to ensure users access only current, evidence-based resources.

A note from the ACE team

We look forward to work alongside you on your guideline development journey. Our efforts will be multiplied through these collaborations where we create a repository of high-quality, evidence-based guidelines that will enhance clinical practice and improve patient outcomes.