



COATS PRISON REFERRAL - PAROLE OFFICER GUIDE

1. What is the name of the referral form?

COATS Prison referral – Parole Officer

2. Where can I access the referral form?

The referral is directly available by accessing this link: <https://survey.acso.org.au/index.php/184565?lang=en>
It is a good idea to 'bookmark' this link or save it to your 'favourites' in your web browser. If you ever happen to misplace the link, the referral form can also be found by following these steps:

- i. Visit the COATS website at <http://coats.acso.org.au/>
- ii. Click on the *Referrals Forms* menu at the top of the page, which will direct you to the page with a list of various COATS referrals



3. Who can use the referral form, and when should it be used?*

This referral form is to be used for Parole Officers for clients who are in custody, at one of the following stages:

- a) Parole has been granted to the client
- b) Client is at the Parole Assessment Suitability Stage

*Please note that if your client is on a Parole Order, and you are referring to COATS when the client is already in the community, do not use the Parole Officer Referral Form. You will need to use the COATS Intake Referral form, which is sent to referral@acso.org.au.

4. Who will process my referral form after I have submitted it to COATS?

The Client Services Unit (CSU) at COATS are responsible for processing your referral form. CSU consists of the following areas that you might already be familiar with: Brokerage, Intake, TCA Unit, Prison Referrals and Prison Allocations. Once CSU have processed the referral, they will notify the Prison Allocations team, who will make arrangements with the relevant prison, to have the client assessed in custody by a COATS assessor.

5. How will I know when an assessment appointment has been arranged in custody by COATS for my client?

Access to the Penelope portal will provide you with this information. Once the assessment appointment is booked, it will appear in your portal. If you have an individual account, the file will be assigned to you and your CCS location.

6. What is the difference between Parole Granted and Parole Suitability Assessment Stage from a COATS perspective?

TABLE 1: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PAROLE GRANTED AND PAROLE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT STATE FOR COATS			
REFERRAL STAGE	DESCRIPTION OF REFERRAL	NAME OF CASE IN PENELOPE	REFERRAL TO TREATMENT
Parole Suitability Assessment Stage	Client has made an application for parole to Adult Parole Board. Parole Officers will send a referral to COATS within 6 months of the client’s prison sentence end-date.	Pre-Parole + Date of Referral Eg: Pre-Parole 20/05/2016	Assessment only at this stage, with treatment recommendation formulated. Treatment will not be arranged until parole is granted.
Parole Granted	Parole Officers will send these referrals to COATS, when parole is granted to a client and the client is still in custody.	Parole + Start Date + (Duration of Parole Order) + Referral Number Eg: Parole 20/05/2016 (18)#1	AOD treatment plan will be developed by COATS assessor, and CSU will arrange the recommended treatment with suitable providers.

7. If my client is assessed as Pre-Parole, how will COATS know when Parole is granted in order to arrange treatment?

If your client was assessed by COATS as Pre-Parole (Parole Suitability Assessment Stage) a treatment plan would have been developed (refer to Table 1) however the treatment would not have been arranged during this stage. Once parole is granted to the client, it is the responsibility of the CCS case manager to notify the COATS CSU team by emailing referral@acso.org.au. A copy of the Parole Order is also required so that COATS can update the client’s file in Penelope with the Parole details. Note, a new referral form is not required in this instance however CCS will need to provide COATS with the client’s residential address and contact number, CCS reporting details, and any other relevant information. From this point, COATS will refer to the assessment documentation, and arrange treatment if treatment was recommended.

Note: If the CCS case manager contacts COATS six months after the client’s assessment in custody, COATS may ask that a new referral be sent in order to undertake another assessment.

8. I've heard about 'insufficient time to assess in custody', what does this mean?

COATS requests that any prison referral is submitted at least 10 days within the client's release date from custody. This is to ensure that COATS can arrange an assessment with the prison, and so that assessors receive clearance to enter the prison. If the referral form is submitted within 10 days or less, COATS will still attempt to arrange an assessment, which may occur face-to-face or by videoconference.

If a prison assessment or videoconference cannot be arranged, CSU will inform the Parole Officer, and offer to arrange an appointment for the client in the community, so that it is already organised by the time they are released. There are various hubs across Victoria, where COATS undertake assessment.

9. Can I have a copy of the referral form?

Yes. Once you have submitted the referral form, you will be provided with the option to print a copy, or save the document as a PDF file.

10. Who can I contact at COATS for assistance?

The Client Services Unit (CSU) at COATS is your first point of call, and the team is available on 03 9413 7196 or prisonreferral@acso.org.au. Depending on the nature of your enquiry or your location, CSU may forward your query to a manager or to one of COATS' regional hubs if required.

Good luck and enjoy! From COATS