

Clinical educator tip sheet: Evaluation using the SPEF-R

Occupational Therapy Clinical
Education Program

What are clinical educator tip sheets?

The contribution of clinical educators to a student's learning and development while on placement is fundamental to the success of the placement and the overall outcomes for the student. This series of tip sheets aim to equip clinical educators with knowledge, information, processes and tools on key topics related to placement organisation and student learning.

Why is this topic relevant?

Evaluation on placement is central to the learning experience of the student during the placement. It should direct the learning opportunities which are made available and guide the support actions provided by the clinical educator. This tip sheet provides guidance on assessment with particular reference to the Student Placement Evaluation Form [SPEF-R] (The University of Queensland, 2008).

Why evaluate?

- To enhance motivation by acknowledging achievement
- To identify learning needs and provide direction for future learning
- To ensure the student is attaining a certain level of clinical skills and can demonstrate them as usual behaviour
- To identify students who are not performing to expectations and target remedial plans (Department of Health 2012)

How do we evaluate?

- Continuous: The clinical educator is able to consider the performance of a student throughout placement to provide evidence of the student's performance.
- Formative: Often referred to as assessment for learning, takes place during a program of learning and involves structured feedback. Allows students to understand how they are progressing, reinforces motivation, and encourages them to review learning goals. A half way report provides this opportunity.
- Summative: Often referred to as assessment of learning, occurs at the end of the placement to provide a final judgement. (adapted from Department of Health 2012).

What assessment tool do we use?

Assessment on placement for occupational therapy students nationally is by way of the SPEF-R (The University of Queensland, 2008), in a full or approved modified version (with the exception of some placements occurring at the beginning of the programs at some Universities).

Student Practice Evaluation Form (SPEF)-Revised Edition Package[®] is made available to clinical educators who are due to support students. It is accompanied by an [on-line web based training package](#). This package provides clinical educators with information to assist with the use of the SPEF-R as well as supporting practice placement planning.

How is the SPEF-R used?

The SPEF R promotes and enables clinical educators to provide constructive, objective and detailed feedback against profession endorsed placement domains, learning objectives, and performance items. Students are encouraged to self-evaluate prior to their half way and final evaluation. The evaluation will identify achievement against each learning item in the domain and aspects that require further learning.

Half-way SPEF-R evaluation can be used to:

- Evaluate performance from the beginning of placement to half way
- Provide rating and feedback for each domain
- Review learning goals with the students which can be modified as necessary
- Provide feedback which addresses the students strengths, desired outcomes and make suggestions for further learning
- Identify if there are concerns that the student may be at risk of failing, prompting the University to be notified as soon as possible. (University of Queensland, 2008)

Final evaluation is:

- Completed in the last week of the placement
- Provides an overall summary of performance
- Focuses on performance/examples from half-way to end of placement
- An opportunity to provide feedback on overall strengths, areas where skills are emerging and/or provide recommendations for future learning. (University of Queensland, 2008)

It is important that clinical educators ensure an evidence based evaluation by:

- Recording observations as they occur
- Documenting actual and desired behaviours
- Providing verbal feedback and evaluation documentation which is objective and factual.

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Evaluation should involve open discussion between the student and the clinical educator. It provides a valuable opportunity to seek feedback from the student (University of Queensland, 2008) and support learning needs to inform the rest of the placement.

Further resources

The Occupational Therapy Practice Education Collaborative- Queensland have produced a series of videos to support clinical educators, including: [Student evaluation](#)

Clinical Education Preparation and Support (CEPS) Program consists of a series of online modules with content relating to teaching and learning in clinical settings including: Module 7: [Assessment](#)

References:

Department of Health (2012) Module Seven – Assessment, Clinical Educator Preparation and Support Program <https://ilearn.health.qld.gov.au/login/index.php>

University of Queensland, (2008). Student Practice Evaluation Form-Revised Edition (SPEF-R). In *Student Practice Evaluation Form (SPEF)-Revised Edition Package*. Brisbane: The University of Queensland.

Occupational Therapy Practice Education Collaborative - Queensland (2007) [Clinical Educator's Resource Kit](#)

Developed by: The Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Program (OTCEP): Striving for continuous improvement in access to, and the quality of clinical education for pre entry students and new graduates within Health and Hospital Services across the state.

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