

SPEF-R2 Frequently Asked Questions

In this document, you will find answers to common questions about the SPEF-R2, the SPEF-R2 update process, transition from the SPEF-R, and what it means for users.

About the SPEF-R2 and the Update Process

What is the SPEF-R2?

The Student Practice Evaluation Form - Revised (Second Edition), or SPEF-R2, is an updated version of the Student Practice Evaluation Form – Revised Edition (SPEF-R), which is used by all Australian and some international universities to assess the performance of occupational therapy students on block practice placements.

Why has the SPEF-R been updated?

In the years since the SPEF-R was released, the occupational therapy landscape in Australia has evolved significantly. Occupational therapy practice areas and service delivery models have continued to expand. Practice placement approaches have become more diverse, with innovative practice education solutions becoming commonplace, and emerging areas of practice creating new opportunities for occupational therapy service delivery. It was clear the content needed to be reviewed and refined to make the SPEF-R tool more contemporary and relevant to the current health care environment. Review was also considered important following the release of the new Australian Occupational Therapy Competency Standards (AOTCS) in February 2018 (Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, 2018).

Who was involved in the update?

In keeping with the original SPEF and SPEF-R development, a small but varied team of occupational therapists formed to review the SPEF-R and undertake a process of extensive national consultation. The SPEF-R2 project team included the SPEF-R nationwide coordinator as project lead, a member of the original SPEF development team, two experienced occupational therapy academic researchers, an experienced clinician and professional practice educator, a university professional practice placement coordinator and a project officer (also an experienced occupational therapist and professional practice educator). A reference group providing broad stakeholder representation was also established and involved in the update process.

Were clinicians and students included/consulted in the SPEF-R2 development process?

Yes. Consistent with both the SPEF and SPEF-R development, the SPEF-R2 process has involved extensive stakeholder consultation. The draft SPEF-R2 was distributed nationally for consultation and feedback amongst occupational therapy practice educators, academics and students from all Australian states. Responses from more than 200 clinicians and university staff, in addition to more than 60 students enabled the project team to identify key trends for reworking the tool. Further refinement of the draft SPEF-R2 occurred in 2019 through additional consultation with the SPEF-R2

Project Team and the SPEF-R2 Reference Group – resulting in the SPEF-Revised (Second Edition) Package – otherwise known as the SPEF-R2.

Has the SPEF-R2 been trialled in real practice settings?

Yes. The Draft SPEF-R2 was piloted in late 2019 and early 2020 across six states and territories by occupational therapists in public and private settings - in addition to university practice educators - spanning a wide variety of practice settings and contexts. This process was followed up with stakeholder feedback and consultation via focus groups undertaken in the first half of 2020. This led to a handful of final amendments, additions and improvements included within the final SPEF-R2.

What exactly is changing?

The vast majority of changes and updates have occurred within the SPEF-R2 Evaluation Form itself. Various adjustments and updates to wording have been included throughout in order to improve clarity and to bring terminology more in line with contemporary occupational therapy practice. Significant attention has been paid to reducing repetition and duplication within the evaluation, whilst also helping to distinguish individual items and domains from one another. Expansions to culturally safe practice, reflective practice, and student health and wellbeing have been included - in addition to updates to clinical/professional reasoning, occupational therapy models of practice, documentation, student peer learning and many, many more areas. In total, improvements have been made to over 40 items (across Stream A & B) in order to improve applicability and utility of the tool. Overall, three items have been removed, and two new items added.

Where can I see an overview of the changes to the evaluation form?

A summary of the core changes and updates within the SPEF-R2 Evaluation Form has been developed, and has been shared with licensed universities. Contact your local university for a copy.

Does this mean other components of the SPEF-R Package have been updated as well?

Yes. A fully updated SPEF-R2 User Manual has been developed in conjunction with updates to the Evaluation Form. For the first time, the manual now includes content about the online platform, with instructions and guidelines on how best to use it. Further information has been incorporated about rating descriptions and applying the rating scale, in addition to new content arising out of industry suggestions and requests from the national consultation process. Moreover, the *Concerns Exist Form*, *Student Review of Professional Practice Placement* and *Résumé Preparation Tool* have all been made available in a fillable form format. All of these resources will be included in the SPEF-R2 distribution to licensed universities.

Transitioning to the SPEF-R2

I've become so familiar with the SPEF-R, will the SPEF-R2 require a big adjustment for me?

No. The update has been designed to make the transition as smooth as possible with the SPEF-R2 continuing with the same overall format and structure of the SPEF-R. In the SPEF-R2 pilot, 100% of participating clinicians and academic staff said they found it easy to adapt to the SPEF-R2.

Is the overall process for evaluating student performance changing?

No. The updates and changes relate more to the content rather than the process. The structure, rating scale and halfway/final assessment timing remain unchanged. You may notice some additional items have become “core”, resulting in small changes to calculation of pass/fail results, but this will be automatically calculated for you within the online system. Consult your local university or the SPEF-R2 Manual if you have any questions about this.

What resources are available for more information?

You are encouraged to peruse the updated SPEF-R2 User Manual, which has been shared with all university occupational therapy programs. The manual includes a full rundown of the student evaluation process, including multiple new clarifications, explanations and additional content relating to using the SPEF-R2 Online system.

Is there any SPEF-R2 online training available?

Yes. As a component of the SPEF-R2 development, the project team have also made significant updates to the SPEF-R2 Training Site, available at this link: <https://spef-r.shrs.uq.edu.au>

The training site guides the user through a full, step-by-step rundown of the SPEF-R2, how to use it to evaluate a student on placement, and how to incorporate the SPEF-R2 into the placement planning processes. The site is also a comprehensive source of tools, tips and strategies to optimise the success of student placements through embedding the SPEF-R2 throughout the placement. In conjunction with the SPEF-R2 User Manual, the SPEF-R2 Training Site sits as an invaluable tool to help with student placement planning, facilitation and review.

I have never used the SPEF-R or the SPEF-R2 before - where do I start?

Please start by using the SPEF-R2 User Manual, and visiting the SPEF-R2 Training site (<https://spef-r.shrs.uq.edu.au>). Your local university will also readily provide assistance with any queries you may have, this includes educator training.

When will the SPEF-R2 be available?

The SPEF-R2 will be released to individual universities throughout Australia in December 2020 but may be used at differing time points on a case-by-case basis. This will largely depend upon practice placement timing within each program and will allow some flexibility in order to ensure minimal disruption to placements in progress. Timing will be negotiated by The University of Queensland with each university directly, with the aim of all universities to have transitioned across to the SPEF-R2 by early 2021. Please contact your local university for further information on the transition timing.

The SPEF-R2 Online

Is the online system being updated as well?

The SPEF-R Online system has been updated to include the new SPEF-R2 Evaluation Form changes and amendments. This has resulted in a rebranding to the SPEF-R2 Online system, which is available at the following link: <https://www.spefr.online/>. For those who have used the SPEF-R Online before, you will find the same functionality and utility as in the past. As such, the transition to the SPEF-R2 Online system is expected to be simple for the vast majority of users.

Will the online system still look the same?

Yes. Changes will be limited to the content within the SPEF-R2 domain names, items and item examples themselves in order to reflect the evaluation form updates. Structures, page scaffolding, links and functionality remain almost identical to the system you are familiar with. You will notice that branding in the online system has been transitioned from the SPEF-R to the SPEF-R2 Online.

Will my existing login details still work?

Yes - assuming you have been provided with a login by your local university. As with the SPEF-R Online previously, clinical educators will still need to log in to each university's separate SPEF-R2 Online domain. Select the relevant university from the dropdown box on the landing page (<https://www.spefr.online/>) before proceeding further. If you cannot recall your previous password, you can simply reset it yourself by clicking on the "Forgot password?" button within your local university's SPEF-R2 Online portal.

What will happen to my saved SPEF-R customised templates?

Customised templates that you have created in SPEF-R will transition across to the new SPEF-R2 Online system, and you will be able to view and print a PDF version of these. Due to some changes in the wording and numbering of items, it is not possible for these to transition directly into a SPEF-R2 version. It is recommended that you review the current customised templates and save to a local folder prior to the transition. This data can be copied into a new SPEF-R2 template.

To assist in this process, new SPEF-R2 blank templates (which can be obtained from your local university) are available to copy the data into, review and then make any required changes to create a new SPEF-R2 template. These can be distributed to other educators as a resource.

We apologise for the inconvenience this may cause, but anticipate this process to be a once-off activity.

What if I have any more questions?

If you do have any questions or queries regarding the SPEF-R2, please access the SPEF-R2 User Manual, and visit the SPEF-R2 Training site at this address: <https://spef-r.shrs.uq.edu.au>

For further information, including SPEF-R2 transition timing and processes, please contact your local university practice placement coordinator.

Thank you for supporting practice education!