

Occupational Therapy Practice Education Manual 2025

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Faculty of Health School of Health and Social Development

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It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the contents of the practice education manual and it is understood that the student agrees to abide by the policies and procedures outlined.

It is also the students' responsibility to be familiar with and to adhere to the placement provider's policies and procedures.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following notice will apply:

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Occupational Therapy Practice Education Manual

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STAFF PROFILE

The Practice Education team consists of Unit Chairs/Lecturers whose unit (subject) contains a practice education component. Deakin Practice Education Facilitators (DPEFs) who have an OT clinical background and Practice Education Professional staff.

Deakin Occupational Therapy Practice Education Staff Kelly Barker Professional Placement Officer
hsd-otpraced@deakin.edu.au | 5247 9432

Nikki Lyons Practice Education Coordinator Nikki.lyons@deakin.edu.au | 5227 8411

| Placement | Unit Code | Unit Chair | Contact Details |
|--|-----------|---|--|
| First Year Site Visits | HSO102 | Pearse Fay Waterfront Lucinda Watson Warrnambool | pearse.fay@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 78322 l.watson@deakin.edu.au +61 3 556 33104 |
| First Year Clinical Placement | HSO104 | Jacqui Edwards | j.edwards@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 73338 |
| Second Year Simulated Placement (on-campus) | HSO202 | Alice Pratt | alice.pratt@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 73611 |
| Second Year Simulated Placement (telehealth) | HSO208 | Lucinda Watson | l.watson@deakin.edu.au +61 3 556 33104 |
| Third Year Clinical Placement | HSO305 | Sally Logan Sarah Riddell | sally.logan@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 78116 sarah.riddell@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 72615 |
| Third Year Community Based Practice Education (CBPE) | HSO304 | Emma Clark | emma.clark@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 73551 |
| Fourth Year Clinical Placement | HSO405 | Caroline Mackinnon | c.mackinnon@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 72207 |
| Fourth Year Project Placement | HSO418 | Nikki Lyons | nikki.lyons@deakin.edu.au +61 3 522 78411 |

Please note that many staff are employed on a part-time basis and therefore may not respond immediately to messages.

This information is current, though subject to change. Updated information will be available in the [Student Handbook](#).

Occupational Therapy
School of Health and Social Development
Faculty of Health
Deakin University – Geelong Waterfront and Warrnambool

Geelong: 5227 8366

Warrnambool: 5563 3100

Website: www.deakin.edu.au

The physical address for the Geelong Waterfront Campus:
1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong Victoria 3220

The postal address for the Geelong Waterfront Campus:
Locked Bag 20000, Geelong Victoria 3220

The physical address for Warrnambool Campus is:
Princes Highway, Warrnambool, Victoria 3280

The postal address for Warrnambool Campus is:
PO Box 423, Warrnambool Victoria 3280

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INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE EDUCATION

DEFINITIONS

Practice Educator (PE)

This term refers to the primary supervisors/practice educator of the student within the agency or organisation providing the placement.

Deakin Practice Education Facilitator (DPEF)

This term refers to the Deakin allocated Occupational Therapy facilitator who is responsible for supporting allocated students during their placement. The DPEF is also available to support the PE as required.

Practice Education

This refers to the practical component of the OT program. In other places it may be referred to as fieldwork, field education, placement, work integrated learning, clinical placement or student placement.

Education Provider (EP)

This refers to the educational institution or university.

Placement Provider

This refers to the organisation, centre, service, agency or facility providing the student placement.

Community Based Practice Education (CBPE)

This innovative program provides practice education via student directed occupational therapy services with a population focus to school communities.

Student Placement Evaluation Form (SPEF-R2)

This is the assessment form by which all Deakin students are evaluated during placement. The SPEF-R2 is a standardised assessment tool that has been adopted by many OT programs across Australia. It is available to students via CloudDeakin. Practice Educators/Supervisors will be given the option to use either an online or a hard copy of the tool.

World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT)

This term refers to the international governing body of occupational therapists.

Victorian Occupational Therapy Practice Education Alliance (VOTPEA)

This term refers to the alliance of Practice Education Coordinators from each of the Victorian OT university courses including ACU, Deakin University, Federation University, LaTrobe University, Monash University and Swinburne University of Technology.

THE PURPOSE OF PRACTICE EDUCATION

For students to integrate knowledge, professional reasoning, and professional behaviour within practice and to develop knowledge, skills and attributes to the level of competence required by qualifying Occupational Therapists (WFOT 2002, p.24)

Practice education is underpinned by the philosophy that:

- Learning is enhanced when students are required to actively link theory and practice within a supportive environment
- Students need the opportunity to demonstrate, in a professional setting, that they can meet the standards of competence required for graduation
- Practice education provides mutual benefits to students, the providers, and the profession

WFOT practice education requirement:

The WFOT and the Australian Association of Occupational Therapists (OT Australia) require that accredited occupational therapy courses include 1000 hours of practice education that reflect a range of current practice areas across the lifespan. Within the Deakin University Occupational Therapy program, the 1000-hour requirement is embedded within academic units across the four-year course.

DEAKIN PRACTICE EDUCATION QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Practice Education is embedded within various academic units, which may also include lectures and seminars. In each of these units practice education is a mandatory requirement. All students are required to undertake at least one placement in a rural or regional location (excluding the place of the student's principal residence).

| Year Level Trimester | Unit | Practice Education Focus |
|-------------------------|--------|--|
| Year 1 Trimester 1 | HSO102 | The first trimester of Year 1 focuses on preparation for practice education. Students will experience a range of practical workshops and site visits with the aim of preparing them to understand current and emerging areas of practice, OH&S issues in practice, professional behaviour and risk management. |
| Year 1 Trimester 2 | HSO104 | Two-week full-time clinical placement or 10 days over 3 weeks clinical placement |
| Year 2 Trimester 1 | HSO202 | One-week, full-time simulated placement |
| Year 2 Trimester 2 | HSO208 | One-week, full-time simulated placement |
| Year 3 Trimester 1 | HSO305 | Two days per week for 6 weeks clinical placement or Two-week full-time clinical placement |
| Year 3 Trimester 2 | HSO304 | 8-week full-time Community Based Practice Education (CBPE) placement using long arm supervision model |
| Year 4 Trimester 1 | HSO405 | 8/9 week full-time clinical placement or 4 days per week for 11-weeks clinical placement |
| Year 4 Trimester 2 | HSO418 | 80hr Innovation and Evaluation (I&E) Project Placement 72hrs project work across 11wks, plus 8hr Student Conference Attendance maybe be remote, in-person or blended (negotiated b/w student/supervisor) |

DEAKIN PRACTICE EDUCATION SUMMARY

Year 1 – INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE EDUCATION (HSO104)

Students will participate in and observe practice in health and community organisations, developing occupational therapy skills and competencies.

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 | Domains 1 – 5 (Final SPEF-R2 only, unless performance concerns)

Year 2 – SIMULATED PLACEMENT (HSO202 & HSO208)

Students will consolidate their learning through a week of on-campus simulated practice education in which they will have the opportunity to implement their newfound knowledge in a simulated practice education setting, supported by experienced clinicians. The purpose of these placements is to allow all second- year students to be exposed to key skills and competencies and to have time to practice them prior to their third- and fourth-year clinical placements.

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 | Domains 1 – 5 (Final SPEF-R2 only, unless performance concerns)

Year 3 – CLINICAL PLACEMENT (HSO305)

Students will develop specific practice skills, according to the occupational therapy professional skills and competencies that underpin the profession. They will identify people's needs, choices, capacities and preferences within a person-centred approach leading to the collaborative identification of occupational therapy goals. The focus includes selecting measurement tools and methods, administering occupational therapy assessments and evaluations, observation skills, developing intervention plans, report writing and case presentations.

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 Domains 1 – 6 (Final SPEF-R2 only, unless performance concerns)

Year 3 – COMMUNICATY BASED PRACTICE EDUCATION (CBPE) (HSO304)

The CBPE Program provides student-driven occupational therapy services that have a population focus on primary school communities. It provides opportunities for students to develop skills and competencies, which are not generally covered in traditional occupational therapy placements, such as consultancy, community development and health promotion education. CBPE aims to provide services where occupational therapy service delivery gaps currently exist and to improve access for the local school community.

This innovative program is structured as follows.

- Three day on-campus orientation program facilitated by DPEFs
- Placement based at a primary school in a student Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) model
- DPEFs liaison visits to schools as required using long arm supervision model

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 Domains 1 – (Halfway and Final SPEF-R2)

Year 4 – CLINICAL PLACEMENT (HSO405)

The focus is to build on and extend competency development from earlier practice education experiences enabling students to apply occupational therapy reasoning processes to a range of practice situations and complete the attainment of skills according to the OT Australia professional competency requirements. Students will learn to self-evaluate, be professionally accountable, and articulate clinical/professional reasoning related to occupational therapy practice.

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 Domains 1 – 8 (Halfway and Final SPEF-R2)

Year 4 – INNOVATION AND EVALUATION PROJECT PLACEMENT (HSO418)

The I&E Project Placement is the final practice education placement for the Occupational Therapy Program at Deakin University. This unit is designed to extend occupational therapy practice knowledge and skills by contributing to innovation in real practice settings to address current challenges or gaps in OT services. Students will, either individually or as part of a group, plan and/or design an innovation for an occupational therapy service. Students will then implement this innovation on a pilot basis, and evaluate the success of the pilot implementation, providing the service with a full report of the project design and outcomes.

→ Assessable SPEF-R2 Domains 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 (Project Stream B) (Final SPEF-R2 only, unless performance concerns)

PRACTICE EDUCATION STYLES

Collaboration / Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)

This model is one of practice-based learning, which involves responsibility for more than one student at a time. It is suitable for all student levels in most practice areas. It is based on facilitation of peer assisted learning strategies by the PE in which the students learn together through discussion and practice. The aim is for students to support each other's learning, whilst the PE provides clinical instruction and supervision. Additional student benefits of this model include practicing teamwork skills and problem-solving skills whilst experiencing a sense of shared ownership of the learning experience.

Group Supervision

Group supervision enables shared responsibility for learning whilst offering valuable opportunities for discussion. Often the learning gained by all parties is enhanced because of these shared opportunities. Group supervision can also save time for a supervisor by supporting several students simultaneously. However, it is important that students still have some opportunity for one-on-one supervision, so issues that may be more sensitive in nature can be addressed.

Emerging OT roles

Deakin is committed to providing a program which prepares graduates to work in a range of new and emerging fields of employment including project management. Therefore, an important part of this commitment is to recognise the learning gained by students undertaking practice education at sites where the PE may not necessarily be an OT, such as in the CBPE placement program. This type of practice education is valuable and is always co-facilitated by one of the allocated DPEF'S, all of whom are OT's. Student benefits include more opportunities for autonomous learning, increased professional growth and enhanced lifelong learning skills.

Long Arm Supervision

Refers to a model of supervision where the supervisor is not physically present at the placement site but provides guidance and support remotely. This ensures that students receive adequate supervision and support even when OTs are not employed by the placement provider. In this model, the supervisor may use various communication tools such as video calls, emails, site visits and phone calls to interact with the student, review their progress, and provide feedback.

Shared Supervisors

It is not unusual for agencies to share a student between PE's, particularly smaller placement providers where several staff may work part-time. This model requires excellent communication and a clear definition of the learning objectives early, to ensure that all parties are working toward the same goals. Both supervisors are responsible for student assessment. Shared supervisors provide students with a unique opportunity to observe different working styles.

Flexible Learning

Flexible learning acknowledges that each student has different learning needs and utilises an individual learning style. A flexible learning environment promotes choice and negotiation to enable the development of a learning program which best suits the individual student.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments to a placement may be discussed with the placement provider to support the needs of an individual student who may have a health condition or disability. If students believe they may require reasonable adjustments to placement, they are advised to contact the [Disability Resource Centre](#), Division of Student Administration.

CLINICAL PRACTICE EDUCATION GOALS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY BY VOTPEA (Victorian OT Practice Education Alliance)

The Clinical Practice Education Goal guide was developed via a collaboration between the following Victorian OT courses, La Trobe University, Monash University, Deakin University, Australian Catholic University, Federation University, Swinburne University. This document has been prepared to help support clinicians with decision making regarding offering placements for occupational therapy students from the six universities. It provides a general overview of the goals of the placements for different year levels. Occupational therapy training in Victoria includes four-year bachelor's degrees or two year Masters.

What we expect from supervisors

- Provision of a welcoming environment for students
- Provision of an acceptable work area for students
- Adequate supervisor time for the planning and implementation of a quality practice education program
- Provision of clear expectations for students
- An orientation program which introduces students to the way things work
- Practice Educators/Supervisors must be qualified OTs to supervise students with a minimum of 2 years' work experience

What we expect from students Year 1

Observation and orientation to the clinical environment of occupational therapy practice.

This first placement is designed to allow students to become familiar with the role of the occupational therapist within the health care team and to provide opportunities to participate, as appropriate, in clinical activities.

Students are beginning to develop knowledge related to occupational therapy theory and may practice some clinical skills such as patient handling, observation, and communication. Students should be aware of patient safety and of legal and ethical issues in practice.

Year 2

Under direct supervision, students are able to complete designated clinical tasks such as introduce the role of OT, complete initial assessments, document information, formulate goals, plan and deliver OT intervention. Students are beginning to be able to apply theoretical knowledge related to models of practice and are able to describe and discuss clinical/professional reasoning in relation to clients they have worked with.

Year 3

The goal of this placement is skill development in basic occupational therapy competencies, and it is expected that students will have an active involvement in assessment and treatment of clients. Some universities also offer project placements at this level, with students functioning as project managers to design and develop project proposals.

Year 4

Final year placements and the final clinical placement allows for further development and consolidation of occupational therapy skills. Students should be able to demonstrate competence in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation and show readiness for independent practice. Some universities also offer project placements at this level, with students functioning as project managers to design and develop project proposals.

PRACTICE EDUCATION PREPARATION

Practice Education Orientation Program

- Prior to placements, students are required to attend a mandatory Practice Education Orientation Session.
- Topics such as confidentiality and professional expectations are discussed.

Police Record Check (PRC)

- All Deakin students are required to obtain a new Police Record Check (PRC) at the beginning of each academic year.
- Deakin uses a company called [Fit2Work](#) for all PRC processing. Students will receive an email from Fit2Work inviting them to apply for their PRC. Police Record Checks can take up to 21 days to be returned, therefore ALL students are advised to lodge their PRC application in early January.
- Students WILL NOT be able to commence placement without a current PRC. It is the students' responsibility to know when their placement is scheduled each year. Failure to acquire a PRC four weeks prior to the start date of placement will, in most instances, result in a failure of the unit. There is a fee associated with applying for a PRC.

What is a Police Check?

- A Police Check is an offence history review, which contains all court offences. If a person is convicted of an offence in the Magistrate's Court and that person commits no further offences, the conviction will be deleted from the person's record after 10 years.
- State and Commonwealth legislation requires background, health and criminal record screening of all applicants for employment involving contact with people under 18 years of age, the infirm and the aged. Employment includes unpaid work and field placement, or practicum experience performed by students during their studies. More information regarding Police Record checks may be found at: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/national-police-records-checks>
- Students who have lived in Australia for less than 12 months and international students must obtain a PRC from the country in which they last resided.
- If a student believes there may be issues that may affect their application for a PRC, it is advised that they contact the Practice Education staff.
- Students are required to advise Deakin Practice Education staff of any changes to any changes to their criminal history. Including if they are:
 - Charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or
 - Convicted or found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment in Australia and/or overseas

How do I get a PRC?

- Deakin will send students an email invitation via Fit2Work
- Fit2Work will then send students a link to complete the application process online. Students will be required to supply 100 points of certified identification to complete the process. More information will be provided about this in the email from Fit2Work.
- When the police check is finalised, both the student and Deakin will automatically receive notification of the outcome.
- **Note:** Deakin will receive confirmation directly from Fit2Work.

Working With Children Check (WWC)

- The Working with Children Check (WWC) creates a mandatory minimum, checking standard across Victoria. The WWC Check helps to keep children safe by preventing those known to the police pose a threat to the safety of children from engaging in either paid or voluntary work with children.
- It is a requirement that all students obtain a Working with Children Check (WWC) at the commencement of the course prior to the commencement of practice education. Students WILL NOT be able to commence placement unless they have a current WWC.

Is my Working with Children Check current?

- The WWC check remains current for 5 years, (unless revoked or surrendered prior), so most students will only need one WWC for the duration of their degree.
- Students must ensure that their WWC is current and apply for renewal prior to any placement the card is due to expire.

How do I apply for WWC Check?

- Students can obtain the WWC application form from any Australia Post Office or commence their application online <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply>
- Students will need to provide documents to verify their identity either online or in person at an Australia Post outlet. WWC is a free process for volunteers.

What happens to my WWC Check information?

- Students must upload a copy of their WCC Card to InPlace and list the card number, check type and expiry date.
- If requested, the University will disclose the results of the WWC to the agency prior to the commencement of placement and will provide a photocopy if required.
- Information relating to the WWC, and any photocopies will be stored in a secure location.
- The photocopy of the WWC will be destroyed when Deakin no longer has a legal obligation to retain it
- Students should ensure that they have a copy of their WWC card when attending placement

NDIS Workers Screening Check

- All students are required to undertake a [NDIS Worker Screening Check](#) at the commencement of the course. This is an assessment of whether a person poses risk to NDIS participants.
- Students who fail to obtain a NDIS Worker Screening Check may not be able to undertake practice education, impeding their progression in the course.

Aged Care Statutory Declaration

- Aged Care placement providers may request students provide a Statutory Declaration.

If the Practice Education Team is unable to secure placement, because more than one placement provider deemed a student to be unsuitable or unsafe for placement, based on de-identified disclosable outcome/s from one or more of the above-mentioned checks, the student will be precluded from the course.

Student Code of Conduct

- All students undertaking placement will be required to sign and return the Deakin Occupation Therapy Student [Code of Conduct form](#) which can be found on Cloud.
- It is important that all students are familiar with the Student Code of Conduct.

Immunisation

- The University expects that all students will be immunised prior to commencing placement.
- Students must complete and submit the [FOH Clinical Placement Vaccine Checklist](#) at the start of their first year of the course.
- The [Annual Influenza Vaccination Form](#) must be completed annually. (Medicare Immunisation Statement accepted).
- Copies of both forms must be provided to the University prior to commencing placement.
- It is strongly recommended that students have the following immunisations: Hepatitis B, Influenza, Pertussis, Measles-mumps-rubella, Varicella, Tuberculosis, COVID 19.
- Failure to present evidence of up-to-date immunisation may significantly limit student placement options.
- Vaccination requirements may change, and Deakin OT will keep students informed of any changes relating to vaccine requirements for placement. Students should always seek vaccination advice from their GP prior to placement.
- The University [Medical Centres](#) located at the Waterfront, Waurin Ponds, and Warrnambool campuses are available for vaccinations and advice.

PLACEMENT ALLOCATIONS

- Students are not usually permitted to be allocated to placement at sites where they have links due to potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest, such as:
 - They are currently working at the site or have done so in the past
 - They have a relative or close friend working at the site
 - They have a relative who is in receipt of services at the site
 - The student is currently in receipt of services at the site or has been in the past
- It is the student's responsibility to disclose such links to their Unit Chair and given this information, the practice education staff (Unit Chair, DPEF & PE) will decide if the practice education environment is appropriate for the student.
- Students are not permitted to seek their own placement, as it is important that placement providers negotiate with a single university staff representative who is familiar with the associated policies, procedures and contractual obligations. In addition, placement is assigned to each student based in part on information gained from previous practice education experiences. The team aims to provide each student with a variety of learning experiences over the four-year course.
- All students will be given the opportunity to indicate their areas of interest for practice education prior to placement allocation. Students can provide this information via the InPlace system. The Practice Education Team, despite significant effort, will not always be able to place students close to home or in their area of interest. The team is limited by the offers received from placement providers.
- Students may independently seek health or occupational therapy related work, as a volunteer or in a paid capacity, either at home or abroad. This time, although considered valuable by practice education staff, will not contribute to the students' course-related, assessable, practice education hours.

Practice Education Special Circumstances Application

- The Practice Education team acknowledges that at times special circumstances may exist which affect a student's ability to participate in placement due to the placement's location. In such instances students are advised to complete the Special Circumstances section within InPlace to inform the Practice Education Administrator for consideration.
- Supporting documentation may be requested to support requests for special circumstances. Details regarding any special circumstances should be entered into the InPlace system as early as possible, to enable appropriate arrangements to be made.

Practice Education Placement Confirmation

- Confirmation of placement with the student will be made via the InPlace system.
- Please note, that it is also the students' responsibility to regularly check InPlace as changes to the dates or location of placement may occur due to circumstances outside of the Practice Education Teams control.

- It is the student's responsibility to contact their Practice Educator (PE) a minimum of two weeks prior to the commencement of placement to discuss the specific expectations and requirements regarding the placement. When students speak with their PE, they should confirm the placement address, date of commencement, starting time, dress code, placement absence procedure, pre-reading and other relevant information.
- Students are responsible for their own travel (including flights, petrol, tolls, parking fees), accommodation and any associated costs when participating in placement. It is important to note that students will be required to undertake placement in a rural community at least once during the four-year program. When student accommodation is required for placement, the Practice Education Administration Officer may be able to assist with providing relevant information regarding potential accommodation options.
- A [Pre-Placement Checklist](#) is available to assist students with planning for their placement

International Placements

- We currently have placement relationships with universities in India and Denmark.
- At times there may be the opportunity for OT students to apply to complete one of their OT placements overseas. There is the maximum of one international OT placement permitted, given the Deakin OT course is preparing graduates to meet the APHRA competencies and to practice in the Australian context.
- Students who have attended one international placement can still apply for Deakin study tours, given study tours are not a component of the OT course curriculum.

Student Emergency Contact Details

- In the event of a student emergency during placement it is important that information regarding the students' contact details, and any relevant medical alerts, are accessible and up to date on the InPlace system.
- A [Student Emergency Details](#) must be completed for each placement the student attends. Students should also provide their practice educator with a copy when placement commences.

Student Car Use During Placement

- Students are permitted to drive agency/provider fleet cars on placement.
- Students must always have their license accessible.
- Students who are probationary drivers will be required to bring and display their "P" plates and adhere to the probationary driver requirements.
- Students may be asked to use their own car during placement. Please discuss any request from your placement provider to use your own car with your DPEF.
- Student vehicles are not covered by Deakin's insurance program regardless of whether they are used by students for Deakin business/study.
- For information on coverage for students on placement, refer to [Insurance for students on placement or work experience](#)
- Deakin does not reimburse students for petrol use, parking or tolls resulting from using their personal car on placement.
- Students are not permitted to transport consumers in their own vehicle.

Home Assessments | Home Visits

- Students are not permitted to attend Home Assessments or Home Visits on their own without a placement provider staff member present.
- This person is not required to be an OT

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Reporting

- It is the students' responsibility to familiarise themselves with the placement providers OHS Policies and Procedures during the placement orientation period.
- If a student is involved in, or witness's an incident during placement, the process is
 - Inform the PE
 - Adhere to the agency's policies/procedures for reporting an incident
 - Seek medical advice if necessary
 - Complete the placement providers incident form with assistance from PE
 - Inform the DPEF within one working day of the incident occurring
 - The DPEF will likely complete a DeakinSafe incident report on behalf of the student
- [DeakinSafe](#) is an online tool for reporting and managing hazards and incidents.
- [Deakin Health and Safety consultants](#) can assist with any questions.
- Staff and students can access the DeakinSafe platform using their Deakin log in credentials.
- The DPEF and Unit Chair will advise the Course Coordinator if there is the potential for the incident to give rise to any insurance claims.
- The university has a duty of care to students whilst they are on placement. If an incident of personal injury, harassment, discrimination or sexual harassment occurs, the matter will be escalated by the university to the appropriate authority and the university will ensure the student is sufficiently supported throughout the relevant process.

Insurance

- The Deakin University insurance policies provide insurance cover for students during practice education. A copy of the Certificate of Currency can be provided to agencies and Practice Educators on request to the Practice Education Administrative Officer.
- Students are advised to discuss insurance coverage regarding driving the placement providers vehicles with their Practice Educator.
- Importantly, students are not permitted to transport clients in their own vehicles.
- **Please note** - an incident or injury involving a student or patient that could potentially give rise to an insurance claim must be reported to the Unit Chair and Course Coordinator immediately as the University's insurer may deny liability claims if the incident has not been reported to the University.

PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE EDUCATION

Professional Behaviour

- Students are expected to adapt to appropriate placement provider norms, culture and expectations regarding such things as presentation, communication, dress, workload, breaks and organisational responsibilities.
- In instances where students may be unable to adapt due to cultural or religious reasons, students must raise their concerns prior to placement.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, in accordance with the [OT Australia Code of Ethics](#) at all times.
- Professional behaviour includes responsibility for one's own learning and students are required to undertake independent research to facilitate learning during practice education.

Confidentiality

- All students must be aware of the specific legislative requirements pertaining to confidentiality such as the Health Records Act 2001, which allows individuals to exercise rights and choices about how their personal and health information is handled. Some states in Australia also have privacy legislation such as the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Victoria).
- If a client's case study is required for a unit assessment, the Unit Chair will provide students with advice regarding the most appropriate way of presenting a client case study whilst preserving confidentiality. A minimum standard for case reports is that permission is obtained from the individual and all case reports (verbal or written) are de-identified.
- Confidentiality must also be maintained for information gained directly or indirectly from organisations regarding staff, projects, finances or other organisational business.
- Students are required to complete a [Confidentiality Agreement](#) for each placement and are required to give a copy to their PE. If the agency does not have a Confidentiality Agreement, a copy of one is available for students to use from Deakin.

Examples of confidentiality breaches

- Accessing information that you do not need to know, to do your job
- Unauthorised reading of a person's file including accessing information on family, friends, co-workers or a celebrity
- Reading the test results of family, friends, co-workers or a celebrity
- Talking about a client in a public place
- Telling a relative or friend about someone you have seen and identifying them
- Sharing, copying or changing information without authorisation
- Copying or forwarding information to a third party without consent
- Copying examples of work containing confidential information
- Misuse of computer passwords

Consent Forms

- Any student completing a case study assignment about a consumer during placement is required to gain consent from the consumer.
- Consent must be documented using the appropriate Deakin OT [consent form](#) either via the consumer signature or a note initialled by the student indicating that verbal consent has been gained. (CBPE placement use a CBPE specific Consent form).
- Verbal consent might be relevant in cases such as when telehealth is used or when a consumer is unable to sign the document.
- If an interpreter or other person such as a clinician supervisor is required to assist with the completion of the form, their details are to be included in the relevant section.
- At the completion of placement, the student will upload the signed Consent form to the Practice Education submission folder with their Practice Education Hours Summary Form, SPEF-R2 & InPlace Practice Education Feedback Form, in the PDF format currently required and destroy the original document.
- This file will be transported by the Professional Placement Officer to TRIM (the primary secure record storage system preferred by DU) and stored in the student's TRIM file.
- The consent form will not be uploaded with the assignment into the Assignment Dropbox, because this will identify the consumer to the marker/s.
- The form can be downloaded from the Practice Education site

Uniform Requirements

- Every student is required to purchase a Deakin University polo shirt to wear during placement unless the PE has specifically stated that a uniform is not appropriate for the setting, for example, in some mental health facilities. Polo shirts can be purchased from the [Deakin University Shop](#).
- If the PE requests that a uniform not be worn, the student should dress in appropriate professional clothing with thought given to the client population including, age, gender, culture and the duties the student will be required to perform. This generally means pants or skirt (below the knee) and tops of sufficient length so as not to reveal skin.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn while on placement. This means supportive, enclosed, rubber soled footwear that minimises the risk of slips, trips or infection.
- In hospital environments, students should not wear rings or false fingernails because they interfere with hand- hygiene techniques. When providing direct patient care some placement providers will require that students adhere to a 'bare below the elbow's' policy, to ensure effective hygiene.
- It is the student's responsibility to discuss the specific uniform requirements for each site with the relevant PE.

Pregnancy

- General guidance for Australian workplaces is that employers can request medical clearance evidence from pregnant women wishing to work in the six weeks prior to their due date.
- If you are pregnant and plan to participate in practice education in the six weeks prior to your due date, you may be asked to provide medical evidence that you are cleared to participate in practice education.

Health Issues or Disability

- It is the student's responsibility to disclose to their Unit Chair and/or DPEF and PE any health issues or disabilities that may affect their ability to perform a particular role or to expectation while on placement.
- The Occupational Therapy program regards student medical information as confidential and will not disclose information without permission.
- Students can see additional support and advice from the [Deakin Medical Centre](#)
- If a student identifies a health issue or disability that may impact their ability to perform to expectation on placement, they may be eligible for consideration of "Reasonable Adjustments" to placement. Students should contact the [Disability Resource Centre](#), Division of Student Administration, for further information.
- If a student becomes unwell with an infectious disease (gastro, flu etc.) they may need several days away from placement, so as not to infect others. Please discuss any infectious illness or disease procedures with your PE.

Practice Education Structure

Each placement experience involves different opportunities; however, the basic structure of each will remain the same. The basic practice education model includes:

- Practice Education Preparation Session
 - Facilitated by Unit Chair and/or DPEF on campus or online prior to the commencement of placement
- Student contacts PE
 - Student introduces self and discusses specific details prior to commencing placement
 - Student completes Pre-Placement Checklist
- Learning Plan
 - Student identifies learning needs, goals, activities and relevant outcome measures
- DPEF introductory liaison
 - Phone call, email contact with both student and PE
- Placement provider Orientation
 - Facilitated by PE
 - Student provides Student Emergency Details form to PE
 - Students complete a Confidentiality Agreement
 - Student completes placement orientation
- DPEF liaison
 - May be a site visit, phone call, email or group meeting depending on need throughout placement
- Mid-placement review and completion of Halfway SPEF-R2 (if appropriate)
 - Facilitated by PE, discussed with student
- Final evaluation of SPEF-R2
 - Facilitated by PE, discussed with student
 - Student completes and submits all required Practice Education documents
 - Students complete any practice education related assignment/s as per Unit Chair instructions

- DPEF liaison
 - Debrief with DPEF offered for both student and PE. (May be debrief tutorial, phone call or email depending on need)
 - Increased DPEF contact may be required when the student, PE or DPEF identifies challenges during placement or when the PE is not an occupational therapist, for example for long arm supervision in CBPE.

Recording Placement Hours

- It is the student's responsibility to record placement hours using the Schedule on InPlace and to complete a Practice Education Hours Summary Form upon completion for signing by the placement supervisor.
- The total hours for each day are calculated from the start to the finish time inclusive. Therefore, lunch and tea breaks are included in the total placement time.
- A standard clinical placement day is generally 8.5 hours in duration (including breaks).
- If the student is participating in a camp where they are required to be on call for a 24hr period, the total camp hours are to be included.
- The reality of OT work rosters means that some OTs will work weekends and/or am/pm shifts. In such circumstances, students will be asked to mirror their PE's work roster.
- Flexibility of hours may be possible in some circumstances if negotiated with and agreed by the student, PE and the DPEF. However, the site providing the placement has the final say regarding hours of attendance.
- The Practice Education Hours Summary Form is to be signed by someone who can verify that the student was participating in practice education related activities at the times recorded by the student on InPlace. This would generally be the PE or DPEF.
- DPEF's facilitated sessions are counted as placement related hours and are therefore included on the Practice Education Hours Summary Form.
- The Practice Education Hours Summary Form is to be uploaded to InPlace (under Practice Education Documents) with the InPlace Student Practice Education Feedback Form and Student Practice Evaluation Form (SPEF-R2), so the information can be saved to the student's file as a formal record of completed placement hours.
- Students are advised to keep a copy of their Practice Education Hours Summary Form for their own records.
- Students are not expected to make up placement days for public holidays. However, if a student has attended placement on a public holiday this time should be counted in the placement hours. If your placement falls on a Public Holiday, please check with your supervisor if you need to attend.

Absenteeism

- Placement education attendance requirement expectation is 100%. However, if a student is absent from practice education due to illness, it is their responsibility to inform the PE no later than the expected start time and to inform their DPEF that same day.
- The student is expected to comply with the agency's policy and procedures regarding absences and communication expectations, including compassionate leave.
- A medical certificate or Statutory Declaration must be provided for every missed day of placement and uploaded to InPlace at the end of placement.

- If a student is absent for more than one day of placement, they must discuss with their DPEF, a plan for make-up hours.
- Students must not interrupt practice education for holiday leave or paid employment.
- If placement falls before the commencement of trimester, after the end of trimester or during the Intra-Trimester break, students are still required to attend placement.

Practice Education Allocated Project Tasks

- Students are responsible for undertaking their own assignment/s or associated assessment tasks for each unit, as outlined in the unit guide.
- The PE may also set caseload related projects for students to complete while on placement. University-set practice education related work is an additional requirement to any work or projects that students are required to complete for the PE. Generally, it is expected that university set work should be completed in the student's own time outside placement hours, unless negotiated with and agreed by the PE.

Practice Education Assessment

- Students can expect to receive regular feedback from their PE; therefore, there should be no surprises regarding assessment outcomes at the end of placement for the student, PE or DPEF.
- One copy of the SPEF-R2 is made available to students in hard copy format prior to placement for self-evaluation. PEs are encouraged to request that students self-evaluate on the SPEF-R2, prior to meeting with their supervisor to receive their performance feedback. This process aids in the development of student evaluative judgement and can be a useful tool to aid the supervisor/student discussion when the two SPEF's are brought together.
- The PE will receive a link to the SPEF-R2 online system so that they can evaluate the student's performance during placement. The student will also receive log-in details so they can view their evaluation once it is completed. If the PE chooses not to complete the SPEF-R2 online, they can print a copy of the SPEF-R2 from the introductory email sent by the DPEF or they can request a hard copy be sent via mail.
- The PE will complete the SPEF-R2 at the halfway point (if appropriate) and at the completion of the placement.
- The DPEF is available to guide the PE during the assessment process if required
- From a practice education perspective, the final SPEF-R2 assessment outcome will be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The final grade for the unit will be determined by the university with consideration given to other unit assessment tasks, depending on weightings, as stipulated in the unit guide.
- If a student disagrees with the final unit grade, the standard university appeal process applies.
- Students are required to upload the completed SPEF-R2, Practice Education Hours Summary Form and InPlace Practice Education Feedback Form (and assignment Consent Form if required) as a combined PDF document under the relevant unit on InPlace.

Student Difficulties during Practice Education

- Problems that arise during placement can often be resolved through communication and negotiation.
- The support of the DPEF for both the student and the PE is crucial to aiding early identification and subsequent resolution of problems.
- The DPEF will liaise with the Unit Chair should difficulties arise during placement.
- Difficulties that remain a problem at the mid-placement review must be discussed with the student, PE and DPEF present. A SPEF-R2 [Concerns Exist Form](#) must be completed by the PE and the DPEF may request a halfway SPEF-R2 be completed for those placements where a halfway SPEF-R2 may not usually be required.
- When completed, the PE must forward the Concerns Exist Form to the DPEF and Unit Chair.
- When an issue is identified, management strategies will be collaboratively developed and documented. This provides the student with clear objectives and strategies for implementing changes to enable them to aim to successfully complete placement. This process is closely monitored by the DPEF.
- It is important that students see such opportunities for negotiation and development of documented management strategies as valuable learning experiences, which will enhance their preparation for entering the professional work environment.
- Difficulties which arise during placement may relate to the following:
 - Poor communication between the student and the PE
 - A change of PE during placement
 - The student's inability to manage tasks set by the PE
 - Mismatched expectations between the student and the PE
 - Differences between the PE and students preferred teaching/learning styles and or communication styles
- In some instances, an offer of an extended placement provides the opportunity for the student to have additional time in which they can reach the level of competency required.

Withdrawal from Practice Education

- If there has been an incident or a prolonged legitimate absence which will impact on the student's ability to effectively meet learning goals, there is the opportunity for students to request from their Unit Chair a withdrawal from practice education.
- The student may request withdrawal from practice education in circumstances including:
 - Breaches of occupational health and safety law at the placement provider site
 - Medical grounds
- The PE and/or DPEF may request that a student be withdrawn from placement by the Unit Chair (which usually results in a fail grade) in circumstances including:
 - Unethical behaviour, including undisclosed actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest (breaching the Code of Ethics)
 - Illegal behaviour
 - Gross negligence or misconduct
 - Consistent unsatisfactory performance after due instruction, guidance and mentoring

- The Unit Chair has the final responsibility for deciding whether a student will be withdrawn from placement.
- The Unit Chair and assessment panel for the unit have the final responsibility for assessing and considering the circumstances that led to placement withdrawal and for allocating the students unit grade.

Unsatisfactory Completion of Practice Education

- The decision to determine that a student's performance is unsatisfactory is not an easy one.
- A student should never expect to reach the end of placement and be informed for the first time that they have not achieved a satisfactory level of performance.
- Students can expect to be advised during their practice education placement if their performance is unsatisfactory and given ample opportunity to liaise with their PE, DPEF and Unit Chair to develop and implement relevant performance management strategies.
- When it is recommended by the PE and the University that a student receives an unsatisfactory outcome for practice education placement, the standard University student appeal process applies.
- If a student fails a placement and remains in the course, the placement will need to be repeated the following year when the unit runs next. In such instances the student will be allocated to a different placement provider.

Providing Placement Feedback and Finalising Practice Education Documents

- Students are required to complete the InPlace Practice Education Feedback Form at the end of each placement. This survey will provide feedback about the placement experience to the University only.
- The SPEF-R2 also contains a form called The *Student Review of Professional Practice Placement*. Students may be asked to complete this form by the PE and are expected to comply with this request
- Marks for the Unit will not be released until the Student Practice Education Feedback Form, SPEF-R2, Practice Education Hours Summary Form (and assignment Consent Form if relevant) have been submitted by the student.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Students who require support during or after placement are encouraged to contact their DPEF who has access to some additional support services for students, including the HSD Psychologist. Some of the support services available to Deakin students are outlined below.

[Safer Community](#) – a free, confidential support service for those who experience concerning, threatening, inappropriate or uncomfortable behaviour.

[Student Conduct](#)

[Student Counselling](#) – Our experienced psychologists and social workers offer free and confidential counselling support for all students located in Australia.

[Student Complaints](#) – we hope you find your time at uni to be enjoyable and rewarding however, if you're unhappy about something at Deakin, there are various ways you can let us know.

[HDCOs](#) – Harassment and discrimination contact officers.

[Disability Liaison Officer \(DLOs\)](#) - If disability, health, or mental health affects your studies and participation in university life our Disability Resource Centre can support you.

[Health, wellbeing and safety](#) – access a range of services to help you stay health and safe – physically, mentally and spiritually.

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Victorian Occupational Therapy Practice Education: Best Practice Principles



The purpose of this document is to ensure quality and safe practice education opportunities for Occupational Therapy students undertaking practice education in Victoria.

Acknowledgement: This document is based on OT Futures Practice Education: Best Practice Principles. A Queensland Universities and Industry Collaboration. 2023. This document has been modified by the Victorian Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Alliance Community of Practice.

Membership of the Victorian Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Alliance Community of Practice includes:

Mina Lonsdale, Victorian OT Professional Practice Coordinator, Australian Catholic University

Mong-Lin Yu, Fieldwork Coordinator, Monash University

Lisa Knightbridge, Fieldwork Coordinator, Monash University

Kylee Lockwood, Professional Practice Coordinator, La Trobe University

Robin Lovell, Professional Practice Coordinator, Swinburne University of Technology

Nikki Lyons, Practice Education Coordinator, Deakin University

Jane O'Shanassy, OT Clinical Coordinator, Federation University

Student Selection and Allocation to Placements

- Universities are required by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, to ensure students receive a range of practice education experiences which includes a range of ages, health conditions, settings etc.
- Universities are therefore responsible for allocating students to placements to ensure this diversity is optimised and considering student and organisational needs for placement fit.
- Universities do not allow for pre-placement screening by agencies and hence do not allow pre-placement interviews or agency screening for allocation purposes.
 - There may be exceptions for organisations with legally required high level screening requirements.

- Universities do not allow students to undertake placements in their current place of employment (volunteer or paid) as this creates a perception of, or a real, conflict of interest and may bias the student's evaluation.
- Discussions regarding employment offers within your agency should only occur outside of the practice education period (i.e., AFTER completion of the practice education experience and submission of the final SPEF-R2 for the placement block). This should remain independent of the student learning experience due to the following reasons:
 - Whilst we acknowledge recruitment potential is a known agency benefit and motivator for hosting student placements (Rodger et al., 2007), direct employment offers during placement periods have the potential to interfere with student learning and the opportunity for successful placement completion.
 - Students may experience pressure (to accept or decline these offers) that unduly influences the power balance between the practice educator and the student, and could negatively impact the working relationship and the outcome of the placement

Conflicts of interest

- Students and organisations are required to advise the university of any placement locations where a potential conflict of interest exists.
- This may include placement organisations providing the student a cadetship opportunity, where a family member is employed by the organisation, a family member or student has a financial interest in the organisation.
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest are considered professional practice issues.

Placement Learning and Assessment

- The accreditation standards (for all university education programs) require all students both domestic and international to have competent and sufficient supervision by an AHPRA registered occupational therapist/s to enable students to practice safely.
- Occupational therapists may supervise students as a sole practice educator or within a team of practice educators. If in a team, the lead/primary practice educator takes responsibility for student placement learning and evaluation.
- The World Federation of Occupational Therapists requires a minimum of 12 months experience before supervising students. This document recommends that the lead supervising practice educator has 2-years' experience working as an occupational therapist before supervising 3rd year students, 4th year students or masters students.
- Throughout the placement, students may receive feedback and guidance from other disciplines or staff within the organisation. However, an occupational therapist must have active involvement in the practice education experience, providing student supervision and be responsible for overseeing and finalising student evaluations (i.e. SPEF-R2)

This document recommends the following features of student supervision:

- A minimum of one hour of formal supervision with their practice educator, per week
- Each student must have an opportunity for regular individual supervision sessions
- Paired or group supervision can be provided in addition to individual supervision
- Supervision occurs face to face, where possible
- Supervision content should include:
 - review of performance / progress / learning goals / needs / activities / action plans (use the SPEF-R2 student evaluation tool as a guide)
 - discussion of clinical/professional reasoning and occupational therapy process, facilitation of reflections on practice
 - open, direct, specific, timely and balanced feedback on student performance, with support offered in a safe environment and clear expectations established regarding how to respond to this feedback
 - Any specific concerns around performance should be explicitly articulated in formal supervision.

These are informed by the [Queensland Occupational Therapists Fieldwork Collaborative \[QOTFC\], 2005, Clinical Placement Advisory Committee \[CPAC\], 1997](#).

Student evaluation on placement

- Students are to be formally evaluated using the SPEF-R2 student evaluation form unless otherwise advised by the university.
- Evaluations must occur at halfway and at the completion of the placement by the supervising occupational therapist/s for long block placements.
- The SPEF-R2 must be completed and formally discussed with the student at a scheduled meeting at each point (i.e. at the halfway and at the end of the placement)
- The SPEF-R2 must be submitted as soon as possible at each point (i.e. 1-3 working days)
- Students are to be provided a PDF copy of each evaluation (note: students can access an online version of their SPEF-R2 once it is 'submitted')
- Students are encouraged to self evaluate as part of the SPEF-R2 assessment process.

Managing performance issues

- The university must be contacted as early as possible if a student is not meeting expectations on placement
- Performance issues need to be clearly communicated and documented for the student and the University, including setting clear and realistic expectations and learning opportunities to improve performance

- The university will work collaboratively with the practice educator and the student to determine additional or alternative supports and strategies to maximise the placement outcomes

Supporting students' health and wellbeing during placement

- The university must be contacted as early as possible if a student is not meeting expectations on placement
 - Universities welcome proactive, early identification and consideration of student learning / wellbeing needs that arise on placement
 - Universities work collaboratively with organisations to put in place any reasonable adjustments and supports required
-

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This document has been prepared to help support clinicians with decision making regarding offering placements for occupational therapy students from the six universities. It provides a general overview of the goals of the placements for different year levels. Occupational therapy training in Victoria includes four-year Bachelor's degrees or two year Masters. More detailed information regarding courses and placements can be obtained from each university.

First year

Observation and orientation to the clinical environment of occupational therapy practice. This first placement is designed to allow students to become familiar with the role of the occupational therapist within the health care team and opportunities to participate as appropriate in clinical activities. Students are beginning to develop knowledge related to occupational therapy theory and may practice some clinical skills such as patient handling, observation, and communication. Students should be aware of patient safety and of legal and ethical issues in practice.

Second year

Under direct supervision, students are able to complete designated clinical tasks such as introduce the role of OT, complete initial assessments, document information and formulate goals and plan and deliver OT intervention. Students are beginning to be able to apply theoretical knowledge related to models of practice and are able to describe and discuss clinical/professional reasoning in relation to clients they have worked with.

Third year and first year masters

The goal of this placement is skill development in basic occupational therapy competencies and it is expected that students will have an active involvement in assessment and treatment of clients. Some universities also offer project placements at this level, with students functioning as project managers to design and develop project proposals.

Fourth year and second year masters

Final year placements and the final clinical placement allows for further development and consolidation of occupational therapy skills. Students should be able to demonstrate competence in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation and a show readiness for independent practice. Some universities also offer project placements at this level, with students functioning as project managers to design and develop project proposals.

Australian Catholic University, Deakin University, Federation University - Bachelor of Occupational Therapy

La Trobe University and Monash University - Bachelor and Master of Occupational Therapy
Swinburne University of Technology – Master of Occupational Therapy.