Occupational Science and Therapy
Practice Education Manual

HSO102 / 104 / 205 / 206 / 208 / 304 / 305 / 405
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Students
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 centre's policies and procedures.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following notice will apply:

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Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B
Occupational Science and Therapy
Practice Education Manual

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Current Students and Agencies
If you are having any difficulties with practice education it is advised that you seek assistance immediately. The practice education team consists of Unit Chairs whose units contain a practice education component, Deakin Practice Education Facilitators (DPEFs) and Practice Education Administration staff.

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Please note that the DPEFs have requested that they be called during business hours (unless in an emergency) when using their private mobile phone numbers.
Please note that most staff are employed on a part-time basis and therefore may not always respond immediately to messages.
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Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code
00113B
Introduction to Practice Education

Definitions

Practice Educator (PE)
This term refers to the primary supervisor or practice educator of the student within the centre providing practice education.

Deakin Practice Education Facilitator (DPEF)
This term refers to the Deakin allocated Occupational Therapist practice education facilitator who is responsible for supporting allocated students during their placement experience. The DPEF is also available to support the PE as required.

Practice Education
This refers to the practical component of the OST program. In other places it may be referred to as fieldwork, placement, clinical placement or student placement.

Practice Education provider
This refers to the organisation, centre, service, agency or facility providing the student placement experience.

Occupation, Wellness and Life-Satisfaction Centre (OWLS)
This centre provides practice education via student driven occupational therapy services to communities mainly in the Barwon South Western region. It provides the opportunity for students to develop skills not generally experienced within traditional occupational therapy practice education.

Student Placement Evaluation Form (SPEF-R)
This is the assessment form by which all Deakin students are evaluated during practice education. The form is found in the Student Placement Evaluation Handbook (SPEH). The SPEF-R is a standardised assessment tool that has been adopted by many OT programs across Australia including the four Victorian OT programs. It is available to students via CloudDeakin.

This handbook contains information pertaining to practice education evaluation such as:

- Section One: User manual
- Appendix A: Allocating a result of pass or fail – examples of applying scoring criteria
- Appendix B: Applying the rating scale – an example
- Section Two: Student Practice Evaluation Form
- Section Three: Student review of professional practice placement
- Section Four: Resumé preparation tool. Record of professional practice placement experience

World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT)
This term refers to the international governing body of occupational therapists.
The purpose of practice education

The purpose of practice education:

... is 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.
- Within the Deakin University Occupational Science and Therapy (OST) program, the 1000-hour requirement is embedded within five academic units across the four-year course.
- Refer to Appendix 1 for the Course Curriculum

Deakin's practice education model

- Practice education is imbedded within various academic units, which also include lectures and tutorials.
- In each of these units practice education is a mandatory requirement.
- Deakin practice education is facilitated by Practice Educators (PE’s) and Deakin Practice Education Facilitators (DPEFs) who are qualified occupational therapists.
- All students are required to undertake at least one placement in a rural or regional location.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Practice Education Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Tri 1</td>
<td>HSO102</td>
<td>The first trimester of Year 1 practice education focuses on preparation for practice education. Students will experience a range of practical workshops and site visits each week with the aim of preparing them to understand current and emerging areas of practice, OH&amp;S issues in practice, professional behaviour and risk management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 Tri 2</td>
<td>HSO104</td>
<td>In second trimester of Year 1, practice education commences. The practice education consists of an experience either for one day per week for 12 weeks, or a two-week block, or a one-week block intensive camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Tri 1</td>
<td>HSO205</td>
<td>Practice education may consist of a one day per week placement in a placement or a two-week block placement, or a placement related assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 Tri 2</td>
<td>HSO206</td>
<td>Practice education may consist of a one day per week placement in a placement or a two-week block placement, or a placement related assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Tri 1</td>
<td>HSO305</td>
<td>Practice education options consist of a variety of formats including; one day per week, two days per week or a two-week block placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Tri 2</td>
<td>HSO304</td>
<td>Practice education consists of an 8-week block in either a traditional placement or an OWLS placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 Tri 1</td>
<td>HSO405</td>
<td>Students will be allocated the opposite of what they were allocated in second trimester Year 3, so practice education will consist of the either an 8-week block in a traditional placement or an OWLS placement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Traditional Practice Education** placements see students placed in organisations or agencies where Occupational Therapists are employed. Typically students will be supervised whilst on these placements by an Occupational Therapist.

The **Occupation, Wellness and Life Satisfaction (OWLS) Centre** provides student-driven occupational therapy services to communities mainly in the Barwon South Western region, in partnership with local agencies. It provides opportunities for students to develop skills and competencies, which are not generally covered in traditional occupational therapy programs, such as consultancy, community development and health education. The OWLS program aims to provide services where occupational therapy service delivery gaps currently exist and to improve the access of the local community to health services. Agencies currently include public schools, the Department of Human Services and community mental health agencies.

**Practice Education Styles**

**Collaboration**
This model is one of practise-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 practising 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 as a result of these shared opportunities. Group supervision can also save time for a centre and/or supervisor by supporting a number of students simultaneously.

**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 placement in sites where the PE may not necessarily be an OT. This type of practice education is valuable and is always co-facilitated by one of the allocated DPEFs, all of who are OT’s. Student benefits include more opportunities for autonomous learning, increased professional growth and enhanced lifelong learning skills.

**Shared Practice Educators**
It is not unusual for agencies to share a student between PE’s, particularly in smaller agencies where a number of staff may work part-time or for a student to share two different agencies during one practice education placement. This model particularly, requires excellent communication and a clear definition of learning objectives early in the placement to ensure that all parties are working toward the same goals. Both PE’s are responsible for student assessment. Shared PE’s 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.
What you can expect when you undertake a placement

During your placement you can expect to have access to the following:

- Adequate time for the planning and implementation of a quality practice education program.
- An acceptable work area.
- An orientation program which introduces you to the ‘way things work’ and a current orientation manual specific to the agency, including safety procedures, to which you can refer throughout your placement.

What your practice educator will expect of you when you undertake a placement

**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. 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**
Although the placement is primarily observational, students are able to describe and critique assessments, document information and formulate goals. Students are beginning to be able to apply theoretical knowledge related to models of practice and are able to describe and discuss clinical reasoning in relation to clients they have observed.

**Third year**
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**
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.
Practice education preparation

Practice Education Orientation Program
- At the beginning of each trimester students attend an on-campus Practice Education Orientation Program prior to attending placement.
- The program includes practical elements and includes topics such as confidentiality and professional expectations.
- All students are to attend the orientation program, which is considered a mandatory requirement, in many units, prior to attending placement.

Police Record Check (PRC)
- It is a requirement that all Deakin students obtain a new Police Record Check (PRC) at the beginning of each academic year. There is a fee associated with applying for a PRC, the price is updated on the police website each year.
- Police Record Checks generally takes between 14–21 days, however, in busy periods it may take longer, therefore, students are advised to lodge their PRC application form in early January.
- Students will not be able to commence placement without a current PRC.
- A Police Check is an offence history review, which contains all court offences. If a person is convicted for 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. However, if the person commits a further offence, the record will remain. Convictions in the Children’s Court will not be recorded on a Police Check after five years. Any offence for which the penalty is a fine of $10,000 or 2.5 years imprisonment is never erased from the record.
- State and Commonwealth legislation requires background, health and criminal record screening of all applicants for employment involving contact with persons under 18 years of age, the infirm and the aged. Employment includes unpaid work and field placement or practicum experience performed by students in the course of their studies.
- Students who have lived in Australia for less than 12 months must obtain a PRC from the country in which they last resided.
- Victoria Police will now only process applications for a National Police Check, from applicants who have a Victorian residential address. This means that anyone citing an interstate address on the application form will have the application returned to them by Victoria police.
- If you are able to provide documentary evidence of a Victorian address with your application form, then the application will be processed by Victoria Police. Documentary evidence can include a signed tenancy agreement, a letter from the University Residences stating you will be living at the Deakin Residences, a bank statement with a Victorian address or a utility bill with a Victorian address.
- Anyone who currently resides interstate and does not have evidence of a Victorian residential address that they can provide with the application for the National Police Check to Victoria Police should apply for a National Police Check with the police in your state or territory, using the application form that is appropriate to your state or territory. This may entail a higher fee, as the discounted rate is only available through Victoria police.
- You are advised to check with the police in your state or territory about how to apply for a National Police Check.
- If you believe that there may be issues that may affect your application for a PRC it is advised that you contact the Field Education staff.

How do I get a PRC?
- Access the Police Record Check Application Form and the Police Record Check Procedure
- Download and print the police record check form
- Complete the form and send it off with a cheque or money order
- Once you receive your police record check provide a photocopy to the OT Practice Education Administrator
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 police to 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 placement.
- **Students will not be able to commence placement unless they have a current WWC.**
- 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 can obtain the WWC application form from any Australia Post Office.
- The application form should also be read in conjunction with the [Working with Children Check (WWC) Procedure](#) which can be accessed at.
- Students must present a copy of their WCC card to the Practice Education Administrative Officer.
- If requested the University will disclose the results of the WWC to the centre prior to the commencement of placement and will also 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.**

Placement allocations

- Students are not usually permitted to be allocated to placement at centres where they have links such as:
  - They are currently working at the centre or have done so in the past
  - They have a relative working at the centre
  - They have a relative who is in receipt of services at the centre
  - The student is currently in receipt of services at the centre 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 is appropriate for the student.
- **Students are not encouraged to seek their own placement, as it is important that organisations are negotiating with a single university staff representative who is familiar with all of the associated policies and procedures.**
- In addition, placement is assigned for each student based in part on information gained from previous practice education experiences. The team aim to provide each student with a variety of specific learning experiences.
- All students will be given the opportunity to indicate their areas of interest for practice education prior to being allocated a placement. However the University will not always be able to place students in placements in their field of interest.
- Students may seek work experience abroad; however, the time (although considered by the University practice education staff as valuable) may not necessarily contribute to the student's practice education hours.
- Voluntary or paid work in a centre will not be counted as practice education hours.
Practice education special circumstances application

- The unit chairs acknowledge that at times special circumstances may exist which effect a student's ability to participate in placement.
- Students who may find it difficult to complete placement at a particular centre or location may complete the special circumstances section of the Practice Education Areas of Interest form and submit it to the Practice Education Administrator for consideration.
- Supporting documentation may assist requests for special circumstances.
- The Practice Education Areas of Interest form and any accompanying documentary evidence needs to be submitted as early as possible, to enable appropriate arrangements should the application be approved.

Practice Education confirmation

- Confirmation of placement with the student is via email from the Administrative Officer.
- Unless otherwise informed by the University, it is the student's responsibility to contact their PE a minimum of two-weeks prior to the commencement of placement to find out the specific expectations and requirements regarding the particular centre. When speaking with your PE you should confirm; - placement address, -date of commencement, -starting time, -dress code, -pre-reading that you need to undertake and, -any other relevant information.
- Students are responsible for their own travel, 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. Student accommodation may be required and the Practice Education Administration Officer can help you with this.
- A Pre-Fieldwork Checklist is available to assist students with planning for their placement.

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.
- If the PE requests that a uniform not be worn, the student should dress in appropriate clothes with thought given to the client population, their age, gender, culture, the setting 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.
- Deakin University polo shirts are available from the Deakin University Bookshop at the Geelong Waterfront Campus.
- It is the student's responsibility to discuss the specific uniform requirements for each centre with the relevant PE.
- Students are advised to limit jewellery worn as it can pose an occupational health and safety (OHS) risk.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn while on placement. This means supportive, enclosed footwear that minimises the risk of slips, trips or infection.

Student emergency contact details

- In the event of a student emergency during placement it is important that information regarding the student's contact details and any relevant medical alerts are accessible and up to date.
- A Student Emergency Contact Form must be completed for each centre the student attends, in duplicate. One copy must be forwarded to the Administrative Officer one week prior to the commencement of placement. The second copy is to be given to the PE by the student on the first morning of placement.
Immunisation

- The University expects that all students will be immunised prior to commencing placement.
- It is strongly recommended that students have the following immunisations: Hepatitis B, Influenza, Pertussis, Measles-mumps-rubella, Varicella and Tuberculosis.
- **Failure to present evidence of up to date immunisation may significantly limit placement options.**
- The University medical centres located at the Geelong Waurn Ponds and Waterfront campuses are available for vaccinations and advice.

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 to expectation while on placement.
- The OST program regards student medical information as confidential and will not disclose information to your PE without your permission.
- Students can seek additional support and advice from the Deakin Medical Centre, the Disability Resource Centre and Student Life regarding health issues or disabilities that may affect their ability to perform during placement.
- If you become unwell with an infectious disease or condition (gastro, flu etc..) during placement you may need to have time off so that you do not infect others. Many of the client's that you come into contact with may have decreased immunity and therefore an illness that is minor for you might be serious for them. Please discuss any infectious illness or condition immediately with your PE.

Occupational, health and safety (OHS) requirements

- It is the student's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the centre's OHS policies and procedures during their orientation period.
- If you are involved in, or witness an incident, during placement you must:
  - Inform their PE.
  - Follow the centre's policies and procedures for reporting an incident.
  - Seek medical advice if necessary.
  - Complete an incident form for the centre and forward to the PE.
  - Inform their DPEF within one working day of the incident occurring.
- **Complete a Deakin University Accident and Hazard Form and forward it to their unit chair.**
- The DPEF and unit chair will advise the course coordinator if there is the potential for the incident to give rise to an insurance claim.
- The University has a duty of care to the students whilst they are on placement.
- If an incident of personal injury, harassment, discrimination or sexual harassment occurs the matter will be taken by the DPEF to the PE and most likely to the human resources department of the organisation. The unit chair and course coordinator will be informed to ensure that the student is sufficiently supported throughout the relevant process.
- If in the unlikely event that an incident occurs and there is no relevant policy or procedure the student must inform the DPEF and unit chair **immediately** and the unit chair will inform the course coordinator.
Insurance

- **Public Liability Insurance**: Students participating in practice education are covered by Public Liability Insurance, through QBE Insurance (Australia) Ltd. The purpose of Public Liability Insurance is to cover agencies for accidental bodily injury or damage to students whilst on placement. The insurance covers students on metropolitan, rural and overseas placements with a limit of liability of $1,000,000.

- **Public and Products Liability Insurance**: The policy provides insurance cover for the University’s legal liability to pay compensation to a third party in respect of physical injury and/or property damage caused by a student. A third party is a claimant other than Deakin University or the student concerned.

- **Public and Products Liability Insurance for agencies**: The policy provides cover for the University’s legal liability to indemnify the host organisation for increased WorkCover premium costs due as a result of a compensation injury to a student on placement. Although under existing legislation a University student cannot make a WorkCover claim for unpaid placement activities, some host organisations insist on an indemnity agreement before accepting Deakin students.

- Deakin University has no insurance cover for damage to host agency vehicles if they are driven by students.

- A copy of the Certificate of Currency can be provided to agencies and PE’s on request to the Practice Education Administrative Officer.

- 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.

- Students are advised to discuss insurance coverage regarding driving the organisation’s cars with their PE.

- Students are **not permitted** to transport clients in their own cars.

If further information regarding insurance coverage is required please contact:

**Anita Armour - Insurance Risk Officer**

**Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance Services**

Deakin University Geelong Victoria 3217 Australia

Phone: 03 5227 2230 International: +61 3 5227 2230

Fax: 03 52 272682 International: +61 3 5227 2682

E-mail: anita.armour@deakin.edu.au

Website: www.deakin.edu.au
Practice education participation

Professional Behaviour

- Students are expected to adapt to centre norms, culture and expectations in regards to such things as presentation, communication, dress, workload, breaks and organisational responsibilities.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, in accordance with the OT Australia Code of Ethics which can be viewed on the OT Australia website, http://www.ausot.com.au. Search for ‘Code of Ethics’.
- Professional behaviour includes a responsibility to one’s own learning and students are required to undertake independent research to facilitate learning during placement.
- It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of issues surrounding plagiarism, collusion and copyright when on placement and students are referred to their unit guides for guidance. If students need further clarification they should discuss such issues with their unit chair.

Confidentiality

- There are specific legislative requirements pertaining to confidentiality of which students must be aware, such as the Health Records Act 2001, which allows individuals to exercise new rights and choices about how their personal and health information is handled. Some states in Australia also have privacy legislation (Office of the Privacy Commissioner 2009; Privacy Victoria 2008).
- The DPEF can be of assistance in providing 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 or other organisational business.
- Students are required to complete a Confidentiality Agreement during the orientation period for each practice education placement and are required to give a copy to their PE. If the centre does not have a Confidentiality Agreement, a copy of one can be provided.

Examples of Confidentiality Breaches

Accessing information that you do not need to know in order to do your job
- Unauthorised reading of a person’s file.
- Accessing information on family, friends, or co-workers
- Reading the test results of family, friends, or co-workers
- Talking about someone’s personal information without their consent
- Discussing someone’s details
- Talking about someone in a public place
- Telling a relative or friend about someone you have seen and identifying them
- Sharing, coping or changing information without proper authorisation
- Making unauthorised changes to a file
- Copying or forwarding information to a third party without written consent
- Copying examples of my work containing confidential information
- Misuse of computer passwords
- Sharing your password so that a co-worker can access your work
- Using someone else’s password
- Using a computer after someone else has logged in
- Leaving a secure information system unattended while logged on
- Disclosing information without following the agencies guidelines
- Disclosing details over the phone (e.g. to an insurance agency, media representative or lawyer) without authorisation
Practice education structure

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

  - **Practice Education Preparation Tutorial/Lecture**
    Facilitated by Unit Chair and/or DPEF on campus prior to the commencement of placement
  
  - **Student contacts PE**
    Student introduces self & discusses specific details prior to commencing placement.
    Student completes Pre-Fieldwork Checklist.
  
  - **Learning Contract**
    Student identifies learning needs, goals, activities and relevant outcome measures
  
  - **DPEF introductory liaison**
    Phone call, email contact with both student and PE
  
  - **Orientation to agency**
    Facilitated by PE
    Student provides Student Emergency Contact Form to PE
    Student completes a Confidentiality Agreement
    Student completes placement orientation
  
  - **DPEF liaison**
    May be a site visit, phone call, email or group meeting depending on need.
  
  - **Mid-placement review of SPEF-R**
    Facilitated by PE, discussed with student.
  
  - **DPEF liaison**
    May be a site visit, phone call, email, or group meeting depending on need.
  
  - **Final evaluation of SPEF-R**
    Facilitated by PE, discussed with student
    PE or student returns SPEF-R to Administrative Officer
    Student completes & returns Student Review of Placement Form (SPEF-R)
    Student completes & returns signed Timesheet
    Student completes practice education/fieldwork Assignment /s as per Unit Chair instructions
  
  - **DPEF liaison**
    Debrief contact by DPEF 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 difficulties during placement or when the PE is not an occupational therapist.
Recording placement hours

- It is the student’s responsibility to record placement hours on the **OST Fieldwork Timesheet** including the number of hours completed each day, each week and the total for each placement experience. The total hours for each day are calculated from starting and finishing times; that is, lunch and tea breaks are included. If the student is participating in a camp where they are required to be on call throughout a 24hr period the total camp hours are to be included. Public holidays, ADOs and RDOs are not included unless they have been worked.
- Timesheets are to be **signed** by someone, other than the student, who can verify that the student was participating in practice education related activities at the times recorded by the student. This is usually the primary PE or DPEF.
- Timesheets are to be submitted to the Unit Chair for sign off.
- Timesheets will then be forwarded to the Administrative Officer so that they can be kept in the student’s file as a formal record of completed placement hours.
- Students are advised to keep a copy of their timesheets for their own records.
- Flexibility of hours may be possible in some circumstances if negotiated with and agreed by the student, PE and the DPEF. However, the centre providing the placement has the final say regarding hours of attendance.
- DPEF’s facilitated tutorials and supervision sessions are counted as placement related hours and are therefore included on the timesheet and as part of the 90% attendance requirement.

Absenteeism

- If a student is absent from placement it is their responsibility to inform the PE before the expected start time and to inform their DPEF that **same day**.
- The student is expected to comply with the centre’s policy and procedures regarding absences, including compassionate leave.
- If a student misses **two or more days** consecutively during placement a medical certificate must be provided and attached to the timesheet at the end of placement.
- If a student is absent for **10%** or more of their placement they must inform their DPEF and unit chair. If it is possible and appropriate, the opportunity for the student to make up time will be arranged.
- **Students must not interrupt placement for holiday leave or paid employment.**

DPEF sessions

- A DPEF is allocated to each centre for each student attending practice education placement. The DPEF is responsible for supporting students during placement. They offer student tutorial support, individual contact with students, site visits, debriefing and they mark practice education assignments. The DPEF is also available to support and assist the PE through phone contact, placement visits and DPEF facilitated workshops.
- DPEF facilitated educational sessions and tutorials for students are directly related to their practice education placement, therefore the time is to be **included** on the **OST Fieldwork Timesheet**.
- The DPEF will often complete a **DPEF Student Placement Liaison Report** for each contact with a student and/or PE during a placement. This documents a chronological record of discussions and strategies regarding the student’s goals, achievements, strengths, weaknesses and difficulties. It is kept by the DPEF until the completion of the placement, when it will be forwarded to the Administrative Officer. This document may then be forwarded to the student’s allocated DPEF the following year to enhance communication during student handover.
- For students who may be experiencing difficulties on placement this **DPEF Liaison Report** encourages early identification of concerns and documentation of relevant management strategies.
- DPEF names and contact details are listed in the staff profile at the beginning of this manual.
Assignments

- Students are responsible for undertaking their own assignment/s or associated assessments for each unit as outlined in the unit guide.
- The PE may also set projects for students to complete while on placement. These projects will generally be of direct benefit to the centre and take *time precedence* over University placement projects during placement hours.
- 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 such work should be completed in the student's own time outside placement hours unless negotiated with and agreed by the PE. At times it may be possible for students to expand on work that they are doing within a centre as a basis for a University assessment task. Such relevant project links enhance the learning of the student while also adding value to the centre where the work is taking place.

Assessment

- Students can expect to receive feedback regularly from their PE; therefore, there should be no surprises regarding assessment outcomes at the end of placement for the student, PE or DPEF.
- The *Student Placement Evaluation Form* (SPEF-R), accompanied by the reference document, the *Student Placement Evaluation Handbook* (SPEH), has been adopted by all OT programs across Australia, including the four Victorian OT programs.
- Two copies of the SPEF-R are made available to students in hard copy or via email prior to placement. The SPEH is emailed to all PE prior to placement commencement.
- The PE will complete the student assessment at the midway point and completion of the placement as outlined in the SPEH. The DPEF is available to the PE for consultation during this process if required.
- From a practice education perspective the final SPEF-R assessment will be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If a student receives a satisfactory pass for the placement the grade for the unit will be determined by the other assessment tasks as stipulated in the unit guide.
- If a student disagrees with the allocated unit grade then the standard unit grade appeal process applies.

Student difficulties during practice education

- Most problems that arise during placement can be resolved through negotiation.
- The support of the DPEF for both the student and the PE is crucial to aiding early identification and subsequent resolution of problems.
- Difficulties with attaining learning competencies or interpersonal problems between the PE and student are expected to be identified early in placement, documented on the *DPEF Student Placement Liaison Report* and are to be dealt with in consultation with all parties.
- 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 in person with the student, PE and DPEF present. A *Concerns Exist Form* located in the SPEF-R and must be completed by the PE.
- When completed, the *Concerns Exist Form* must be forwarded to the Administrative Officer.
- When an issue is identified management strategies will be developed with the student, PE and DPEF. These will be *documented*. This provides the student with clear objectives and strategies for implementing change in order to enable them the opportunity 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:
- A change of PE during placement
– Poor communication between the student and the PE
– The student’s inability to manage tasks set by the PE
– Differing expectations between the student and the PE
– Differences between the PE and student’s preferred teaching and learning 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 without the grade being marked as a failure.

• The student may request withdrawal from practice education in circumstances including:
  – Breaches of occupational health and safety law at the practice education centre
  – Medical grounds.

• The PE and/or DPEF may request that a student be withdrawn from placement by the unit chair (which would usually result in a fail grade) in circumstances including:
  – Illegal behaviour
  – Unethical behaviour (breaching the OT Code of Ethics)
  – 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 allocating the unit grade and the specific circumstances surrounding placement withdrawal will be considered when doing so.

• Practice education placement may need to be repeated at an appropriate time in an appropriate centre in order that the student has an opportunity to meet their 1000-hour practice education requirement prior to graduation.

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 practice education placement if their performance is unsatisfactory and given ample opportunity to liaise with their PE, DPEF and unit chair in order 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, it will need to be repeated at an appropriate time in an appropriate centre in order that the student has an opportunity to meet the 1000-hour practice education requirement prior to graduation.

Student review of professional practice placement

• The SPEF-R contains a form called The Student Review of Professional Practice Placement. Students are encouraged in all practice education units (and required in some units) to complete this form as it promotes personal reflection. It also provides useful feedback for the University.

• The student is able to be sign and return the form to the Administrative Officer in order to provide feedback.
References


