**SPaRO Quick Reference Guide – External validation**

This guide provides information for principals; schools; Principals, School Leadership (PSLs); peer principals and Directors, Educational Leadership (DELs) as they prepare for and participate in the external validation process using School Planning and Reporting Online (SPaRO).

System requirements for viewing the SPaRO software are Internet Explorer 11, Microsoft Edge, Chrome or Safari. Schools should ensure that they are using the Department of Education’s (DoE) Standard Operating Environment (SOE). Schools that do not have the latest operating system and its associated software are advised to use the department’s software catalogue to bring their machine/s into line with DoE standards. Schools should contact their field services IT team or EDConnect for assistance.

SPaRO is accessed through My Applications in the staff portal. Within the Access Management Utility (AMU), principals can assign themselves access at the **principal** level. Principals then assign **contributor** access (editing rights) or **staff** access (read-only rights) to other users in their school.

For external validation:

• Open the SPaRO application

• Go to your school or select a school by typing the school name or code into the text box

• Select the ‘Self-assessment’ tab – the ‘Evidence Bank’ in the left menu is the default page under this tab

• Select the ‘External Validation’ tab in the left menu to view the sub-menu.

The help menu icon **decorative** in the top right corner of the screen will display help text outlining the information for each section of the page.

## Principal

Principals manage staff access to SPaRO through AMU.

**Principal** users are able to:

• upload files to the submission folder

• edit the executive summary

• create, approve and submit the External Validation School Excellence Framework Self-assessment Survey (EV SEF S-aS)

• delegate contributors to the EV SEF S-aS

• ‘submit’ the executive summary and ‘finalise and lock’ the submission folder

• edit the ‘school determined next steps in the self-assessment process’.

**Contributor** users are able to:

• view and upload files to the submission folder

• edit the executive summary

• edit the ‘school determined next steps in the self-assessment process’ section

• contribute to the EV SEF S-aS (once delegated).

**Staff** users have read-only access to the evidence bank and submission folder.

**Note:** For external validation, principals should review the status of all staff permissions in AMU ensuring appropriate access for the submission.

## School leadership team

School leadership teams prepare and complete their external validation submission in SPaRO. Evidence sets, complete with annotations, need to be uploaded to the ‘<calendar year> Submission’ folder.

**Folders:**

• are in the ‘Evidence Bank’

• specifically for external validation are set up in SPaRO to allow schools to organise and manage their submission. Relevant evidence will be stored in the ‘External Validation/<calendar year> Submission’ folder

• can be used at any time by a school to collect data, evidence and annotations.

**To move or copy files:**

• select the cog decorative to the right of the folder or file for options to move or copy.

**To upload files:**

• open the appropriate folder and select ‘decorativeUpload’

• select the ‘click here to upload’ bar to open the computer file manager to select the file. The selected file will be displayed on the current page in SPaRO

• select ‘decorativeUpload Files’.

**Note:** It is recommended that schools make use of PDF files for optimal access to uploaded evidence by the panel. There is no limit on the number of files uploaded, however individual file size limit is 20MB.

**To upload a link to a website resource:**

• open the appropriate folder and select ‘decorativeNew Link’

• enter a file name for the link in the ‘New Link Title’ text box

• enter the full URL in the ‘Enter Website Address’ text box

• select ‘decorativeAdd Link’.

**To create a hyperlink to a resource saved in SPaRO:**

• open the folder where the file is saved

• select the cog decorative to the right of the file

• select ‘view’ from the cog menu. This will open the file in a new browser window

• copy (Ctrl+c) the full URL of the open file

• return to SPaRO

• highlight the text where the resource will be linked

• select the ‘Insert link’ icon decorative at the top of the text box

• paste (Ctrl+v) the full URL of the external link in the pop-up box

• select ‘Insert’ to create the hyperlink

* click on the hyperlinked text to view options to open, edit or remove the link.

**To create a hyperlink to a website:**

• highlight the text where the resource will be linked

• select the ‘Insert link’ icon decorative at the top of the text box

• select the full URL of the external link in the pop-up box

• select ‘Insert’ to create the hyperlink

* click on the hyperlinked text to view options to open, edit or remove the link.

**Note**: Schools that choose to include video content as part of their submission should load media files to YouTube, ensuring that the privacy setting selected is ‘unlisted’.

**To complete the External Validation SEF S-aS:**

• select ‘SEF S-aS’ from the left menu

• select ‘Create New Survey’ and select the survey from the drop down menu

• select ‘Ok’ in the pop-up dialogue box

• open the survey from the ‘Pending’ folder

• read the information on the instruction page. Select ‘Next decorative’

• confirm your school name, school code and contact details

• select ‘Next decorative’ to continue

• once the survey is completed it will be saved in the ‘Completed’ folder on the SEF S-aS page

• from the ‘Completed’ folder, schools are able to view and ‘Approve’ the survey

• from the ‘Approved’ folder, schools are able to view and ‘Submit’ the survey.

Once submitted, the External Validation SEF S-aS is unable to be edited.

**To edit the executive summary:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Executive Summary’ from the sub-menu

• the template text should be included

• select ‘ decorative Save’.

**To finalise the submission the principal will (two weeks prior to the panel meeting):**

* submit the EV SEF S-aS
* select ‘decorativeSubmit’ on the executive summary page. Once submitted, the executive summary is unable to be edited
* select the padlock icon decorative to the right of the ‘<calendar year> Submission’ folder to finalise and lock the submission. Once finalised, no further evidence can be added to the ‘<calendar year> Submission’ folder.

**Note 1:** A copy of the most recent annual report, school plan and milestones is automatically uploaded to the submission folder when it is locked.

**Note 2**: The DEL and external validation panel are unable to view the school’s submission until the submission is finalised.

**To complete the ‘school determined next steps in the self-assessment process’:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Next steps’ from the sub-menu.

**Note**: This section can be edited up to and on the meeting date. It will be locked/finalised at the same time as the panel report.

## External validation panel

The external validation panel is able to view the school’s submission, including the executive summary, evidence and annotations two weeks prior to the meeting date.

**To view the school’s submission:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Executive Summary’ from the sub-menu

• open the ‘External Validation’ folder in the ‘Evidence Bank’

• open the ‘<calendar year> Submission’ folder to view sub-folders and files

• select the cog decorative to the right of a file and select ‘View’ to open the file or ‘Visit Link’ to open a website resource.

**To check for DEL affirmation:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Director Affirmation’ from the sub-menu.

**Note**: If the submission is not available, the DEL should contact the school. If the affirmation is not visible the lead panellist will email the validation mailbox.

**To complete the external validation panel report:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Panel Report’ from the sub-menu

• identify members attending the external validation meeting by selecting ‘+Add EV team’. Enter the panel member’s email, select the correct option from the drop-down list and confirm their role. For non-SPaRO users, the lead panellist will enter the first name, surname and email address, select ‘+Add non-SPaRO user’ and confirm their role.

• Select ‘decorative Save’ and ‘decorativeClose’.

• affirm the school’s on-balance judgements by selecting the appropriate statement from the drop-down menu against each element.

**Following the panel meeting, the lead panellist:**

• discusses and confirms the report with the principal and panel. The principal may make further changes to the ‘school determined next steps in the self-assessment process’ section, if necessary

• finalises the external validation report by selecting   
‘decorativeFinalise EV Panel Report’ on the ‘Panel Report’ page.

## Director, Educational Leadership

The DEL is able to view and affirm the submission two weeks prior to the meeting date.

**To view the school’s submission:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Executive Summary’ from the sub-menu

• open the ‘External Validation’ folder in the ‘Evidence Bank’

• open the ‘<calendar year> Submission’ folder to view sub-folders and files

• select the cog decorative to the right of a file and select ‘View’ to open the file or ‘Visit Link’ to open a website resource.

**To affirm the school’s submission:**

• select ‘External Validation’ from the left menu

• select ‘Director Affirmation’ from the sub-menu

• select ‘decorative Save’

• select the ‘Affirm the external validation submission’ checkbox and select ‘OK’ in the pop-up box.

**Note**: If the submission is not available, the DEL should contact the school.

**Enquiries**

Contact Leadership and High Performance

E: [validation@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:validation@det.nsw.edu.au)

T: 02 9244 5713

W: [School excellence and accountability](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability)