

FIM™ and WeeFIM®

What are FIM™ and WeeFIM®?

The FIM instrument is a basic indicator of severity of disability. It measures the type and amount of assistance required for a person with a disability to perform basic life activities effectively. It is widely used to measure outcomes of rehabilitation.

WeeFIM is the paediatric version of FIM. It is very similar to the adult FIM but differs in its scoring processes in order to take into account the child's developmental stages.

How are FIM and WeeFIM used in the Scheme?

FIM and WeeFIM scores form part of the criteria for eligibility for both interim participation (initial period) and lifetime participation (rest of life) in the Lifetime Support Scheme.

They are only used for certain participants, depending on their age and injury type:

- FIM or WeeFIM **is** needed if the injured person has had a traumatic brain injury or burns.
- FIM or WeeFIM **is not** needed for spinal cord injury, amputations or blindness/visual impairment.
- WeeFIM **is not** needed if the child is under three years of age, regardless of their type of injury.

An injured person needs to score 5 or less on any item in the FIM, or a score 2 less than the age norm on any item of the WeeFIM because of their injury (e.g. traumatic brain injury or burns) to be eligible for the Scheme.

When should WeeFIM be used instead of FIM?

Use the following to decide between WeeFIM and FIM:

- Children 0 to <3 years – no WeeFIM (or FIM) is required
- Children 3 to <12 years – WeeFIM must be used because age norms apply
- Children 12 to 18 years – as no age norms apply, either the WeeFIM or FIM can be used. The LSA recommends using the most appropriate assessment tool depending on the injured person's age and/or life stage and participation roles.

Which WeeFIM norms should be used?

A table of WeeFIM norms is attached to the score sheet used for WeeFIM, which is available on the LSA's website www.lifetimesupport.sa.gov.au

Who can conduct a FIM or WeeFIM assessment for eligibility?

For interim participation, assessments can be undertaken by a FIM or WeeFIM credentialed member of the injured person's treating team or an assessor approved in writing by the LSA.

For lifetime participation, the assessment must be undertaken by an assessor who is appointed by the LSA.

The LSA cannot accept assessments completed by someone who is not credentialed. In order to be credentialed, an individual must have completed FIM or WeeFIM training and have passed the credentialing exam. The Australasian Rehabilitation Outcomes Centre (AROC) has the licence for the use of FIM and WeeFIM in Australia and coordinates training and credentialing.

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Which should be used for lifetime assessment: FIM or WeeFIM?

If WeeFIM is used for the interim participation assessment, it does not necessarily have to be used again for the lifetime participation assessment. The tool used for the lifetime participation assessment will be determined by the LSA and should be the one that is most appropriate for your age and/or life stage and participation roles.

For example, a 17-year-old participant who has finished school and is working would have an adult FIM assessment for lifetime participation, even if their initial application included a WeeFIM assessment conducted at a paediatric hospital when they were 15.

If more than one assessment has been done, which one will be used?

If there is more than one FIM or WeeFIM assessment, the one conducted closest to the date that an eligibility decision is made will be used. This ensures that the most current information about the injured person's need for assistance is considered when the decision is made.

However, if more than one FIM or WeeFIM has been administered, both scores should be submitted to the LSA.

What if more than one health professional contributes to the assessment?

If the assessment is completed by a number of health professionals, the assessment must be signed by a health professional who is credentialed. In signing, the health professional must have been a participant in the determination of the scoring and agree to the scores provided.

For more information contact the Lifetime Support Authority.