

GETTING STARTED

Suggestions and Resources for Clinical Educators and Student Clinicians

This document provides general guidelines and suggestions for the orientation phase of the clinical placement. Clinical placements are challenging for students who are trying to find their way around a clinical facility, establish relationships with clients, clinical educators, and other staff while improving their assessment and treatment skills. The task can be overwhelming. It is hoped that this guide will provide some suggestions for making a smooth transition into the placement for both the student and the clinical educator. This type of information exchange sets the stage for a collaborative practicum, meeting the needs and expectations of all parties. Clinical educators and students are also directed to the [Clinical Externship Handbook](#), pages 3 through 5 for a general description of responsibilities and procedures.

Facility Information

A basic orientation to the practicum facility will assist in increasing the comfort level of the student clinician. The type of information usually provided to a new employee would be suitable for the student.

Background Information – Student Clinician

The student will provide a clinical portfolio, which contains outlines of academic courses, a description of previous placements and examples of reports and lesson plans. We have found this helpful to clinical educators, allowing them to determine areas that the student should review and highlighting areas where additional background reading may be required. It will also assist in determining how the record keeping in your facility compares to the types of reports that the student has prepared. The following items will provide additional insight into student preparation:

- Academic and clinical background through the University of Alberta (Much of this information is contained in the clinical portfolio)
- Other related experiences (Many students have extensive volunteer experience or previous careers related to speech language pathology)
- Student clinician's perception of their strengths and needs (These can include clinical, personal and academic areas.)
- Student clinician's understanding of the social/educational/vocational/family issues surrounding the clinical population served by this facility
- Student clinician's anxieties about this population or disorder area.

Background Information – Clinical Educator

- Clinical and academic background
- Approaches to assessment and treatment
- Previous student supervision experience
- Clinical educator objectives and expectations (optional and compulsory)
- These can be documented on the Plan for Supervision form, contained in the Clinical Externship Handbook, Appendix A.

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Supervisory Process

It is very helpful for students and clinical educators to discuss the procedures and approaches for various supervisory interactions. The following list provides some general issues for discussion.

- Time for supervision – general schedule of observations and conferences
Remember that 50% of assessment sessions and 25% of treatment hours must be observed. This number is generally higher at the beginning of the placement and decreases as the student becomes more familiar with the clients and confident with her/his skills.
- Preparation for conferences
It is often helpful to provide students with a guide to encourage some self-evaluation before meetings. This will often decrease overall conference time and elicit increased student participation in the conference. A Conference Outline form is enclosed as an example of a self-evaluation guide.
- Hours Requirements
Most students will be anxious to receive as wide a variety of experience as is reasonable within a specific setting, both for their own learning and to meet the hours requirements of the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). It is also important to keep track of the total hours requirement of the placement. Any significant deviation from this recommended hours requirement should be discussed with the student and the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. Students are typically given the sole responsibility for keeping track of their hours and submitting a final hours form for your signature. Students will provide you with a computer generated hours form or a manually completed form for your signature. The Clinical Externship Handbook contains the CASLPA guide to logging hours, (Appendix C) and a list of the CASLPA hours requirements (Appendix D).
- Style of Supervision
Although clinical educators will employ many supervision strategies over the course of the placement, it is recommended that the clinical educator and student discuss the general plan for supervision method and style. It is typical for the student to receive written feedback and individual meeting time on a regular basis.
- Evaluation
The University of Alberta requires that a final evaluation (Clinical Appraisal Form) be completed. It is also recommended that a formal mid-term evaluation take place. Additional information on the evaluation process will be provided just prior to the middle of the placement.
- Concerns and Conflicts
Although most placements proceed without difficulties, it is recommended that the student and clinical educator discuss strategies and procedures for resolution if problems occur. For most difficulties, a prompt discussion between the student and clinical educator will suffice. Students feel much more comfortable coming to clinical educators with problems and concerns if they have been encouraged to do so at the outset. The clinical educator can also discuss concerns with the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education at any time. Please see the Clinical Externship Handbook (page 5 - Problems and Appendix G – Department Appeal Procedures) for additional information.

Additional Resources

Further information about the clinical education process is available through the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. Workshops specific to supervision are often offered through the Centre for Studies in Clinical Education. Please call for additional information.