



## Communication Sciences and Disorders Clinical Observation

Observations of certified professionals providing services to clients with communication disorders help Communication Sciences and Disorders students develop an understanding of specific speech-language and cognitive disorders, clinical evaluation and treatment procedures, and professionalism standards. As part of ASHA Council on Academic Programs requirements, SLP students are required to complete a minimum of 25 hours of supervised observation in their discipline. Typically, this observation is completed in the undergraduate program before initiating clinical training at the graduate level. However, students should be aware that observation is a valuable learning tool and should occur at other times throughout clinical training. Client observations should be supplemented by post-session discussions with the professionals providing the services, and/or by written reflections or journaling.

Although completion of the 25 hours is not a requirement for an undergraduate degree at Penn State, students who have not met the minimum observation hour requirements prior to the start of their graduate program may not be able to begin clinical education until the requirement is met.

*Observation hours generally precede direct contact with clients/patients. However, completion of all 25 observation hours is not a prerequisite to begin direct client/patient contact. For certification purposes, the observation and direct client/patient contact hours must be within the scope of practice of speech-language pathology. For certification purposes, observation experiences must be under the direction of a qualified clinical supervisor who holds current ASHA certification in the appropriate practice area. Such direction may occur simultaneously with the student's observation or may be through review and approval of written reports or summaries submitted by the student. Students may use videotapes of the provision of client services for observation purposes. (Standard IV-C. [http://www.asha.org/certification/slp\\_standards.htm](http://www.asha.org/certification/slp_standards.htm))*

Observation activities (live or guided observation through video recorded sessions) should include experiences with *varied age levels and disorder types*, and should include both *evaluation and treatment* activities. Observations should also include a *mixture of experiences* in schools, hospitals, and clinics in the community. For observation hours to be recognized by ASHA, you must observe a speech-language pathologist or audiologist who has obtained their Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC). Your observation log must be signed by the professional, and they must include their ASHA number. **Penn State CSD students may earn up to 10 hours of experiences in the Penn State Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic, other hours must be completed in hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and clinics.**

Observation hours MUST be documented. Students are required to document observation hours completed at each site on the observation log form. Students are responsible for accurately logging observation hours, obtaining necessary signatures, and keeping track of the observation form. Penn State CSD does NOT track observation hours for undergraduate students.

## The Pennsylvania State University Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic Observation Agreement

1. Signing Up for Observations: Observation of speech and hearing sessions held at the Penn State Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic can be completed by signing up on the observation sheets posted on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor bulletin board in the Ford Building. The time, type of intervention, and room number will be listed on this sign up. *Please note that there is a start up time of a few weeks at the beginning of the semester when clients are first being seen by new graduate clinicians. Observations may not be available until several weeks after start of a new semester.*
2. Sessions in the Penn State Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic vary in length so please note the session length when signing up for observations. Treatment sessions may last 30 to 90 minutes. When you sign up to observe a session you are expected to arrive at least 5 minutes early and remain for the entire session. If your schedule does not permit you to observe the entire session, then do not sign up to observe that session.
3. Plan to arrive for the scheduled observation experiences *at least* 5 minutes prior to the start of the session. You should report directly to the clinic observation room. Please do not wait in the reception area unless the supervisor has instructed you to do so.
4. Clinic observation rooms are directly observable via one way observation windows. The observation room must remain dark for the windows to function properly. Please do not turn the lights on in the observation room.
5. Student observers must comply with all protocols for professional behavior and HIPAA guidelines. No private health information/client identifiers should be elicited from a supervisor, student clinician or parent/family member. Client confidentiality is our highest priority and must be maintained at all times. If you have specific questions about a particular aspect of treatment, please direct them to the supervisor after the session.
6. Dress Code: Observers are expected to follow the clinic dress code guidelines ([see dress code document](#)). Student observers who are not dressed appropriately for the observation will be asked to leave the clinic.
7. Professional behavior throughout the entirety of the session is expected. Student observers are not to bring food or drinks to the observation. Do not chew gum in the clinic.

8. Observation seating is limited. Family members have priority for seating in the observation area. Student observers should quietly observe the session and be mindful of others who are also trying to listen/observe.
9. Cell phone use is prohibited in the observation rooms as it can be a distraction to other observers as well as family members present in the observation room.
10. Cancellations: All efforts will be made to alert you that the session is cancelled, however, many cancellations may occur last minute. All cancellations will be posted in the Penn State Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic on a cancellation board behind the main entrance door. Do not call the clinic to inquire about cancellations.
11. All student observers must complete HIPAA privacy training through CANVAS Pride and attach a copy of the certificate of completion to this observation agreement.
12. Observation Agreement Form: You will need to sign this agreement form prior to your first observation. This form can be turned into Dawn Williams in the Penn State Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic.

Please indicate through your signature below that you are aware of the observation rules noted above and agree to abide by them. Your signature indicates that you agree to keep the information provided during an observation in the Penn State Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic confidential.

This form, along with a copy of your HIPAA certificate of completion, must be turned in to Dawn Williams at the clinic office prior to your first observation.

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Signature

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Date

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Student Name (Please Print)

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PSU ID Number