



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 completing of the 25 hours is not a requirement for an undergraduate degree at PSU, 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 observe video recorded session for clinical observation purpose, but the observation will still require a supervisor signature. (Standard IV-C. 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. **PSU 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. Students may observe the same client no more than two times, as observations should be completed on a wide variety of clients across a variety of clinical practice settings.**

Observation hours **MUST** be documented. Students are required to document observation hours completed at each site on the observation log form, in addition, students are encouraged to write a brief summary of each observation. Client observations should be supplemented by post-session discussions with the professionals providing the services, and/or by written reflections or journaling. Beginning in 2020, programs may require this type of documentation before approving hours.

Students are responsible for accurately logging observation hours, obtaining necessary signatures, and keeping track of the observation form. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Penn State does **NOT** track NOR document observation hours for undergraduate students,

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

1. Sign Up for Observations: Observation of speech and hearing sessions held at the PSU's Speech, Language, and Hearing clinic can be completed by signing up on the observation forms posted on the 4th floor bulletin board in the Ford Building. The time, type of intervention, and room number will be listed on the observation forms. *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 graduate clinicians. Observations may not be available until several weeks after start of a new semester.*
2. Note the session length when signing up for observations. Sessions in the PSU Speech, Language and Hearing clinic vary in length from 30 to 90 minutes. When you sign up to observe a session you are expected to arrive at least 8-10 minutes early and remain for the entire session. You should remain seated in the observation area until the client is dismissed and has exited the clinic hallway. 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* 8-10 minutes prior to the start of the session. You should briefly check in with the clinic administrative assistant, proceed to the clinic and sign the student observer log located across from room H on the small two door cabinet. Once you have signed the log, report directly to the appropriate observation room. Please do not wait in the reception area unless the supervisor has instructed you to do so.
4. Observe the session. 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. Observers are to watch the session quietly. Silence cell phones and other electronics. Refrain from talking so as not to distract therapy sessions in progress.
5. 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. Follow the clinic dress code guidelines (attached). Dress appropriately for scheduled observations. *Student observers who are not dressed appropriately for the observation will be asked to leave the clinic.*
7. Show professional behavior throughout the entirety of the session. Observe quietly. **DO not eat or drink in the clinic. Do not chew gum in the clinic.**
8. Follow seating rules. Observation seating is limited. A maximum of three student observers may be scheduled for an observable session no matter how large the observation area.

9. Follow the family priority rule. **Family members have priority for seating in the observation area.** Some clients are accompanied to clinic appointments by personal aides. A personal aide is the guardian of the client in the absence of the parent. Personal aides are required to maintain 100% line of sight supervision of their assigned client and therefore must directly observe each treatment session. **Personal aides have priority for seating in the observation area.**
In summary: Even if the observation was scheduled weeks in advance, PSU student observers **MUST** allow parents, family, and personal aides priority seating to observe treatment sessions. **Scheduled student observers must leave the observation if the three observation seats are taken by family/aides.**
9. Observe quietly. Be mindful of others who are also trying to listen/observe. 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. Use headphones whenever possible to listen in order to maintain the privacy of the client in the adjoining room.
11. **There will be no observations scheduled in the last two weeks of clinic.**
12. Cancellations: All efforts will be made to alert you that the session is cancelled, however, many cancellations may occur last minute. Do not call the clinic to inquire about cancellations.
13. Complete HIPAA training. All student observers must complete HIPAA privacy training through CANVAS Pride and attach a copy of the certificate of completion to this observation agreement.
14. Complete and turn in documentation. You will need to sign this observation agreement form prior to your first observation. This form must be turned in to the clinic administrative staff assistant in the PSU Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic. Please keep a copy for your records and review.

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 Speech and Hearing Clinic confidential. This form, along with a copy of your HIPAA certificate of completion, must be turned in to the clinic administrative staff assistant in the clinic office prior to your first observation.

Signature

Date

Student Name (Please Print)

PSU ID Number