

Clinical Externship

Clinical Externship (SLP 591)

Upon successful completion of the SLP 590 - Clinical Internship, the student is then eligible to enroll in SLP 591 – Clinical Externship. Students have the option to complete 2 externships or 3 externships. All externships must be supervised by a speech-language pathologist who has had the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) for at least one year.

Each externship is expected to be completed within a semester's time (16 weeks, including time to submit paperwork prior to semester end). Students are only allowed to register for one externship per semester and will not be permitted to register for the next externship until all requirements of the previous are completed. All students must attend at least one externship in a public-school setting and one in a medical setting.

If a student chooses to complete 2 externships:

- Each SLP 591 course will be 3 credit hours
- Student must be at externship site for a minimum of 420 hours within an 11-16 week semester time frame for each externship.
- It is not recommended one plan to work if choosing the option of 2 externships as the student will need to be on site 4-5 days per week.

If a student chooses to complete 3 externships:

- Each SLP 591 course will be 2 credit hours
- Student must be at externship site for a minimum of 280 hours within a 7-16 week semester time frame for each externship.
- Students must be on site at least 3 days per week but could be expected to be there as many as 5 days per week.
- The third externship site must be completed in a distinctly different setting than the other two (this gives you opportunity to explore a working environment that may be of interest and to gain additional skills such as private practice, specialty clinics, early intervention, etc).

For each externship, you are expected to be at the site participating in all aspects of your supervisor's responsibilities and maintain a consistent schedule. Students are not allowed to take vacations during their externship experiences. You will need to earn a minimum of 400 clinical hours and obtain competencies in a wide range of skills in order to be eligible for graduation.

Clinical Hours

Clinical hours are only those hours you spend actually providing treatment and evaluation services to patients under the supervision of an ASHA-certified supervisor.

At the end of your career at WKU you will need to have accrued at least 400 clinical hours to meet ASHA and WKU standards. The **400 hours** does include 25 observation hours and may include up to 50 clinical hours obtained during undergraduate work if approved by the CSD Department. Hours earned during SLP 590 will count toward the minimum 400. All clinical hours earned while enrolled in a graduate speech-language pathology program will be evaluated by the department for transfer and apply toward the 400 hours required by ASHA. However, graduate students transferring clinical hours must fully complete all credit hours and requirements for clinical courses. At least 200 hours must be completed through WKU.

Arranging Clinical Placements

The Externship Directors make placement arrangements for the campus students. Distance students are responsible for seeking their own externship placements. The Distance student provides contact information to the Externship Directors when he/she has identified a site that is willing to pursue a contract with WKU. The Externship Director is responsible for initiating the contract. For all cohorts, there must be a contract in place prior to the beginning of the externship. All campus students enrolling in SLP 591 may be assigned to externship sites that are up to 60 miles away from campus/home and distance students must seek externship sites at least 65 miles drivable distance from 1906 College Heights Blvd, Bowling Green, KY.

Please note: a contract (also known as an affiliation agreement) is a legal agreement between the site and WKU. Due to required legal wording, it may be more difficult and time consuming to obtain a contract in some states.

Employment as a SLP-A

Students wishing to obtain or continue employment as a speech language pathology assistant (or other alternative title given to Bachelor level professionals in a given state) may be eligible to have that experience serve as at least one of their SLP 591 placements (as long as the employer and supervising SLP are in agreement and willing to meet supervisory requirements established by ASHA as well as those outlined in WKU's policies and procedures). The supervising SLP must hold a current CCC for a minimum of one year, obtain two hours of professional development in the area of supervision/clinical instruction, and sign a form indicating his or her willingness to serve as the SLP 591 externship supervisor.

Competencies

All graduates with the Master of Science degree in Speech-Language Pathology will demonstrate entry level competencies with clients across the lifespan and diverse cultural backgrounds as addressed in the 2020 certification standards of the American Speech Language and Hearing

Association and the 2017 accreditation standards of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology.

Further, competencies in evaluation and treatment must be demonstrated across nine different skill areas. In addition, there are contemporary professional issue areas in which each student will earn a competency rating and a met/unmet section of skills. These are delineated in the online database, CALIPSO. Competencies in these areas will be assigned by clinical supervisors during their submission of final performance ratings on students. The accumulation of the competencies serves a key component to being granted the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) by ASHA. For more information on these standards, please visit the ASHA website and look for 2020 Speech-Language Pathology certification standards.

For more information, you may contact one of the Externship Directors at mary.hollowell@wku.edu or april.hardison@wku.edu