



School of Communication Sciences and  
Disorders, Speech-Language Pathology

# Clinical Educator Handbook

2023-2024

## Dear Clinical Educator,

On behalf of the faculty and students of the University of Memphis, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, we would like to extend our gratitude and sincere appreciation for your willingness to be involved in our students' clinical growth and education. We understand that involving students in your clinical practice can require additional effort during your already busy schedule, and we thank you for your time and support. We want you to have a positive experience collaborating with our program. Enclosed is information intended to facilitate the experience for you and the student.

Community-based practicums provide intensive experiential learning that gives the student an opportunity to refine their clinical practice. Emphasis should be placed on integrating the many roles of a speech language pathologist, enhancing critical reasoning and judgement, and refining communication skills. We look forward to working with you to ensure that you and the student have an excellent experience.

We encourage you to contact Katherine Mendez, MA, CCC-SLP, at [k.mendez@memphis.edu](mailto:k.mendez@memphis.edu) if there is any way we can support you.

Sincerely,



Katherine R.G. Mendez, MA, CCC-SLP  
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# Introduction

Welcome to the University of Memphis School of Communication Sciences and Disorders clinical education team!

We are so pleased that you have joined our team of valued and esteemed Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Educators. We hope that you are ready for the stimulating, exciting, and fulfilling world of speech-language pathology clinical education. Your contributions have a direct impact on our students as well as the field of speech-language pathology. We appreciate the time and effort you will spend making a difference in students' lives and hope that we can provide as much guidance and support as possible to assist you in this service.

All speech-language pathology students are placed in on-campus and community-based practicum experiences during their program at the University of Memphis. During the first year, students complete on-site clinic placements and participate in screening hours in development centers. In their second year of study, students participate in both on-site and community-based practicum experiences. Our community partnerships with clinical educators like you provide our students with valuable opportunities to work with varying populations and gain experience from providers with different styles and specialties of care. The success of our program and our students depends on the support and dedication of professionals and mentors like you, and we are deeply grateful for your service.

This guide is designed to help you navigate the world of clinical education and to provide easy access to information that will be useful to you now and in the future. To help prepare you for your role as a clinical educator, we would like to orient you to the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders Speech-Language Pathology Master's Degree Program. The clinical practicum experience is critical for the professional growth of our speech-language pathology students. It provides the student with learning opportunities to enhance their foundational skills and knowledge through professional interaction and mentorship. Throughout this experience, the student should have the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue as well as learn from clinicians with different approaches in the clinical setting. The practicum experience is meant to be a combined effort between the student, the clinical educator, and the university clinic director. This handbook has been prepared to outline the roles of each individual involved to allow for optimal benefit for all parties involved.

## Clinical Education Mission

Our mission is to provide students with a wide variety of clinical experiences while providing a continuum of support using best practices in clinical education.

## Clinical Education Vision

Our vision is to develop future clinicians who

- Provide culturally competent, client-centered care
- Are stewards of best practice
- Demonstrate excellence in critical thinking
- Develop strong relationships with clients and colleagues

## Benefits of the Practicum Experience

### Student Benefits

- ✓ Provides a variety of clinical experiences across the scope of practice in speech-language pathology
- ✓ Gaining confidence in clinical skills
- ✓ Exposure to various clinical settings

### Clinical Educator Benefits

- ✓ Reinvigoration of practice in the clinical educator role
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Service to the profession

### Program Benefits

- ✓ Opportunity to interact with professionals in the field
- ✓ Helps meet accreditation standards



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders strives to be a welcoming environment to all students and faculty. We are committed to advancing all types of diversity and inclusion in order to improve the quality of the clinical education and clinical services we provide and to address pervasive inequities in our world. Diversity, equity and inclusivity are critical and fundamental to developing an SLP workforce capable of providing high-quality, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate care.

We hope that all of our community-based clinical educators share in our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. If you would like resources to help you better support your student in this way, please reach out to Katherine Mendez at [k.mendez@memphis.edu](mailto:k.mendez@memphis.edu).

## SLP Course Sequence

Typical course sequence for students with CSD Background:

<https://www.memphis.edu/csd/pdfs/typicalslpcourseseqwb2022.pdf>

Typical course sequence for students without a CSD Background:

<https://www.memphis.edu/csd/pdfs/typicalslpcourseseqwob2022.pdf>

# The Practicum Student

## Responsibilities:

1. Arrive on time and prepared every working day. It is the responsibility of the student to contact their clinical educator(s) to establish
  - a. when and where they are expected to be,
  - b. the dress code,
  - c. any relevant policies and procedures they should be aware of
2. Acknowledge and adhere to the rules and protocols of the practicum site at all times.
3. Demonstrate responsible, accountable, and ethical behaviors.
4. Progress in their independence as they meet clinical competencies.
5. Perform independently only those skills that the student is competent and prepared to perform at their level of skill.
6. Develop collaborative relationships with clients, the clinical educator, agency personnel, and other members of the practice.
7. Constantly reflect upon their professional performance concerning clinical skill as well as personal qualities that influence their working environment. They may wish to keep a journal of their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve upon or strengthen areas that will benefit them in their professional development as well as their clients.
8. Discuss expectations with clinical educator upon beginning a new clinical placement.
9. Develop knowledge and skills across the scope of practice.
10. Seek appropriate learning opportunities throughout their clinical experiences.
11. Use problem solving and critical thinking skills utilizing evidence-based practice in their clinical decision-making.
12. Arrange an advising meeting with their clinical educator at midterm and a final grade meeting at the end of the semester.
13. Communicate with the clinical educator and clinic director should they become ill or unable to participate in their scheduled practicum at any time.
14. Contact the clinic director immediately when issues arise.
15. Submit clock hours via the Typhon system weekly.

# The Clinical Educator

## Qualifications:

1. At least three years post-graduation of degree
2. Has completed 2 continuing education hours in supervision (program has free opportunities for preceptors to do so)
3. Holds a current Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)
4. Holds the appropriate state license for the duration of the contractual term.

## Responsibilities:

1. Serve as the primary supervisor to assist and monitor the student/extern in refining their clinical and professional skills within our scope of practice as they work towards becoming an independent practitioner.
2. Discuss expectations with students at the beginning of a clinical placement.
3. Provide the student with a broad range of clinical experiences and clinical hours, while maintaining appropriate supervision to allow for best-practice patient care.
4. Assist student with integrating theory into clinical practice.
5. Model professional conduct and evaluate the student's conduct.
6. Regularly provide constructive feedback to the student.
7. Notify the Katherine Mendez to resolve issues including, but not limited to, student's inability to practice at an acceptable skill level, professionalism concerns, etc.
8. Meet with the student at mid-semester to discuss progress.
9. Meet with the student at the end of the semester to discuss progress and final evaluation.
10. Complete final evaluation in Typhon by the last day of clinic (see important dates)
11. Approve student's clock hours by August 5th, complete midterm evaluation by and final evaluation each semester.

*Note: we use the Typhon system for evaluations and clock hours. Please remember to check and approve clock hours on a regular basis. This can be cumbersome if you wait until the end of the semester. If you have any password issues, please contact Katherine Mendez ([k.mendez@memphis.edu](mailto:k.mendez@memphis.edu)).*



# Co-Director of Clinical Education, Katherine Mendez

## Responsibilities:

1. Verify certification and state licensure for the clinical supervisor.
2. Provide record of student's vaccinations, certifications, background check, and drug screening upon request.
3. Provide evidence of professional liability insurance coverage for student during the contractual term.
4. Maintain contact with the community-based clinical educator to review student progress, address any concerns, and assist in optimizing the practicum experience for all involved.
5. Maintain documentation of the student's progress and clock hours.
6. Meet with the student at midterm and end of semester to review clinical experience and the student's final evaluation.
7. Determine the student's final grade and preparedness to enter the professional field.

## Required Training, Immunizations, and Vaccinations

All Speech Language Pathology students are required to complete the following before any clinical training:

- Obtain a University of Memphis badge
- Tennessee Bureau of Investigations (TBI) background check provided through the College of Education
- HIPAA Training, yearly
- Basic Life Support and CPR Certification (American Heart Association or American RC
- Bloodborne Pathogen Training, yearly
- Hazardous Waste Training, yearly
- Minors on Campus Training
- Immunizations and Vaccinations:
  - documentation of two MMR immunizations or proof of immunity for measles, mumps and rubella
  - documentation of two varicella immunizations or proof of immunity for chicken pox
  - TDAP every 10 years
  - Hepatitis B vaccination
  - Flu shot, yearly
  - TB skin test or chest x-ray, yearly

Records for these trainings are kept on file by the UofM.

## Liability Insurance

The University provides liability insurance for all enrolled students. A Certificate of Insurance can be found on the [CSD Clinical Educators website](#).

## Clinical Education

### Determining Placements

Around midterm of each semester, a survey is sent to all community-based clinical educators to gather information about which clinical educators are able to take students in the coming semester. The survey also allows clinical educators to communicate their preferences and requirements to us. Once we have received the results of the survey from most of our community-based clinical educators, scheduling placements can begin.

Placements are determined based on a variety of factors including the location, the student's schedule, areas of interest, and previous coursework and clinical experience, as well as any specific requirements or preferences that a clinical educator or practicum site may have. Most students who are sent to community-based clinical practicum sites are in their second year of the program, though first year students are occasionally placed as well. Students have typically had clinical placements in our in-house clinic before they are sent off-site.

Because there are so many moving pieces, it is not uncommon for schedules to be adjusted right up until the first day of clinic, though we try our best to get most placements established as early as possible.

Once a student has been assigned to you, you will be contacted by the student via phone or email. You will also receive an email from Katherine Mendez, co-Director of Clinical Education in SLP, containing a signed placement letter with the student's information. If your facility has provided us with a checklist of requirements to be completed prior to beginning the placement, the student will complete them before beginning the placement and you will receive a signed copy of the checklist from Katherine Mendez.

### Setting Expectations for the Semester

On the first day of the practicum, we ask you to take 15-20 minutes to discuss the expectations for the placement with the student assigned to you. The student has been provided a Setting Expectations Conversation Guide to help facilitate discussion on topics that are important for setting the stage for a successful placement.

## Relationship

It is our sincere hope that you can build a professional relationship with your student, allowing both of you to experience clinical and professional growth. Having this kind of relationship can help you provide feedback in a safe environment. In a poll of students, students ranked the following as being indicators of good clinical instructors (Sloan, 2005):

- Strong interest in helping students develop clinical competencies, that is, students want to know that you are on their side, rooting for them to do well and supporting them through their clinical experience with you,
- Willingness to share knowledge and expertise
- Ability to create a warm supportive relationship
- Collaborate in problem solving
- Display good listening skills and
- Provide clear feedback

If any conflicts or concerns arise, please attempt to discuss these with the student directly. Conflict resolution opportunities can be modeled and help the student grow. If you are unable to speak with the student, please contact the Co-Director of Clinical Education in SLP to identify opportunities for resolution. The School can create an Areas of Study Requiring Attention (ASRA) plan should it become necessary to implement remediation procedures.

## Modeling

All clinics have different expectations. All clinicians have their own personal preferences. The student may need support to acclimate to your clinic setting. One of the ways this can be achieved is through modeling. Ask the student to observe you their first day or when performing a new task or procedure they have not seen before. Share with them your procedures and model the behaviors you expect them to use during their time at your site.

## Feedback

Providing feedback is an essential component of clinical education, but it may look different depending on the preferences of the clinical educator and the student, as well as the demands of the clinical environment. Please discuss feedback preferences during your Setting Expectations meeting at the beginning of the semester.

There are two points in the semester that we do ask you to set aside 15-30 minutes to meet with the student to discuss progress: **once at midterm and once at the end of the semester**. The student should schedule these meetings with you and has been provided with Conversation Guides to help facilitate these discussions.

## Clock Hours

Students are required to enter hours in into Typhon weekly. Clinical educators are asked to review and approve these hours throughout the semester. Please have all hours approved

by the last day of clinic. See the *Important Dates* document on the [CSD Clinical Educators website](#) to determine the last day of clinic. Instructions for navigating Typhon are also available on the Clinical Education website.

## **Adaptability and Critical Thinking Skills**

Adaptability and critical thinking are essential clinical skills that cannot be taught in the classroom. In our experience, community-based practicum sites provide some of the best opportunities for our students to develop these skills. Modeling your thinking for students can help them learn these skills as well as show them how critical they are in real world scenarios.

## **Professionalism**

Professionalism is another essential skill that textbooks and simulations are not able to teach. Once again, community-based practicum sites provide an unmatched opportunity to observe and practice these skills. We encourage you to talk about professionalism and give feedback to students if you see they are not exhibiting appropriate professional behavior. If a student has persistent or significant problems in the area of professionalism, please notify Katherine Mendez as soon as possible so that we can address the issue.

## **Final Evaluation and Grading**

During the last 1-2 weeks of the semester, clinical educators will receive an invitation from Typhon to complete an evaluation of their student. We ask that you meet with the student in the final weeks of the semester to discuss this evaluation. We recommend opening the Typhon evaluation while you are meeting with the student and entering the scores during the meeting. This saves the clinical educator time and allows the student to know if they met expectations or if there is an area that needs attention in future semesters.

It is essential that the final grade be submitted in the last week of clinic so that the student is able to receive their grade at the University and so that they can graduate on time. We very much appreciate your attention to this deadline.

## **Resources and Support**

We have compiled a variety of resources for our community-based clinical educators, which can be found on the Clinical Education page of our website. We also offer free CEUs in Supervision for our community-based clinical educators through the Betty Webster Symposium on Clinical Education. Additionally, Katherine Mendez is very happy to meet with community-based clinical educators for any reason. Meetings can be scheduled in person at the practicum site, at the University, or over Zoom.