

November 6, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your continued commitments to student education and client/patient/student care as we continue to work through and adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC) met virtually on October 28–29, 2021 and reviewed (a) upcoming changes to the 2020 Audiology Certification Standards and (b) COVID-19 accommodations for SLP graduate students, in effect January 1 – June 30, 2022.

The review of the speech-language pathology (SLP) accommodations was especially timely as the CFCC received questions and concerns from several programs as well as regional and national associations about the 50% in-person requirement for SLP graduate students in effect January 1 – June 30, 2022 as a part of the ongoing SLP COVID-19 accommodations. This requirement was decided at the CFCC's July 29–30, 2021 meeting after receiving information from ASHA staff and volunteer leaders representing several ASHA council, boards, and committees, and feedback from ASHA Board of Directors, the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD), and the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association (NSSLHA) liaisons. This decision was made for a variety of reasons, including:

- The need for students to have in-person experiences in order to gain competency in the scope of practice for entry-level practitioners;
- Concern that students would be graduating from their programs with little or no in-person supervised clinical practicum;
- Telepractice is/was not considered an entry-level skill;
- The need for students, who complete their programs under COVID-19 accommodations, to be recognized in a similar fashion to prior and future graduates, Clinical Fellows, and entry-level practitioners;
- Interruptions to in-person education as well as clinical experiences that may have contributed to the recent drop in SLP Praxis scores and passing rates;
- Needs of clients/patients/students have not changed or diminished during the pandemic; and
- Client/patient/student safety is paramount to the professions.

In response to feedback received before and during the recent CFCC meeting, and after careful consideration of the current clinical landscape, the CFCC created an additional pathway for graduate students/programs to meet the in-person clinical practicum hours necessary for ASHA certification standards. The revised SLP COVID-19 accommodation states that at least 50% of the direct clinical practicum hours from January 1 – June 30, 2022 must be completed in-person, **OR a cumulative total of at least 125 hours of in-person direct contact hours must be acquired within the graduate program.** The 125 hours represent 50% of the *minimum* number of direct contact hours of supervised clinical practicum that must be acquired within the graduate program.

This new pathway recognizes in-person clinical practicum hours that were earned before and during the pandemic. Graduate students/programs that exceed 250 hours of direct contact and/or 400 total hours of supervised clinical practicum are not required to meet the 50% in-person requirement for hours that exceed the minimum hours required for ASHA certification.

The CFCC realizes that the new pathway does not allow programs to determine the amount of in-person services needed for ASHA certification as our previous accommodations allowed, and therefore adjustments to placements and clinic schedules January 1 - June 30, 2022 may be necessary. Please understand that this decision was made to ensure graduate students are ready to move onto their clinical fellowships experience and that they are prepared to provide safe and effective care to clients, patients, and students.

For more information, please visit the COVID-19 section of [www.asha.org/certification](http://www.asha.org/certification).

Sincerely,

Patti Solomon-Rice, Chair, CFCC  
Barbara Rodriguez, Vice Chair for SLP, CFCC