

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Off-campus Clinical Instruction (Supervision)

*Why should I volunteer to be an off campus clinical instructor?*

*Is a “clinical instructor” the same as a “supervisor”?*

*How long do I need to commit to work with a student?*

*How prepared will a SCSU student clinician be when they join me in my setting? What expectations can I place on a graduate student clinician?*

*How frequently do I have to observe a student clinician?*

*Can I allow my student clinician to work alone with my clients when I am in another part of the building? When off site?*

*How often do I have to observe a student clinician who is working with Medicare patients?*

*Does the university provide malpractice insurance for its students?*

*What do I do if my student clinician is not performing to my expectation?*

*How will I evaluate my student clinician?*

*Do we need a “contract” before we accept a student?*

*How will SCSU faculty support me as I work with a student clinician?*

*Why should I volunteer to be an off campus clinical instructor?*

As a working professional, there are many demands on your time. We know that taking on a student clinician to mentor can seem like an unnecessary addition to an already high workload. You have the satisfying opportunity, however, to help shape the next generation of our profession, passing on the knowledge, skills, and wisdom that you have developed in your career. While not replacing skilled staff, a student clinician can add in substantial ways to the services you provide. Typically, our students have already completed over 100 clinical clock hours with a wide variety of clients in our University Clinic prior to beginning their off-campus practicum. Our students arrive with cutting edge knowledge from their recently completed coursework, as well as a fresh perspective on clinical service delivery, and are eager to share this information with you as well as to learn from you. Many of our students have gone on to accept positions in the facilities or school districts that hosted them, with their clinical placement serving as an opportunity to both assess and shape the skills set of future employees. Many of our off-campus clinical instructors report that hosting a student enhances their clinical skill set, and adds to their sense of satisfaction, and enthusiasm for their work.

*Is a “clinical instructor” the same as a “supervisor”?*

Here at SCSU, our preferred term is “clinical instructor”. We have adopted this label to better describe the important work that we do when supporting our student clinicians. The term “supervisor” suggests monitoring workplace behavior, while “clinical instructor” better reflects the support and guidance that we offer to our students as clinical learners.

*How long do I need to commit to work with a student?*

We typically ask that our off-campus partners commit to a full term of clinical instruction in their work settings, typically 12 to 14 weeks.

*How prepared will a SCSU student clinician be when they join me in my setting?*

At SCSU, we believe in providing a strong foundation in clinical practice before sending our student clinicians to an off-campus placement. Your student clinician will have completed a minimum of three full semesters of guided clinical practicum in our on-campus speech-language clinic including diagnostic and treatment session with pediatric and adult clients. Student clinicians will have completed observations in a wide variety of settings and, depending on their planned program, your student

clinician may have already completed a full semester of an off-campus placement prior to working with you.

*What expectations can I place on a graduate student clinician?*

Under your guidance, and with appropriate orientation, your student clinician should be expected to engage in a wide variety of activities. This includes assessment, therapy, clinical documentation, classroom support, inter-professional (multidisciplinary) collaborative consultation, and participation in PPT, grand rounds, and other planning meetings. You will determine the type of activities and degree of participation from your student. You may expect your student clinician act in a motivated, engaged, and professional manner in all assigned tasks.

*How frequently do I have to observe a student clinician?*

The minimum amount of direct observation required by ASHA is 25% of the total contact time with any given student/client/patient. This does not mean 25% of each session, but cumulatively for each individual. ASHA (and best practice), however, strongly suggest that you increase your direct observation and instruction in relation to the needs of your student clinician and client/patient. Student clinicians working in medical settings may require different levels of direct observation depending on the funding source for speech-language pathology services.

*Can I allow my student clinician to work alone with my clients when I am in another part of the building? When off site?*

As long as you are providing the overall level of observation and support that a student clinician needs in a particular situation, you may allow them to work independently while you are attending to other issues in the building. Please maintain an "on site" presence in these situations, or arrange to have another ASHA certified colleague on site and available to the student clinician.

*How often do I have to observe a student clinician who is working with Medicare patients?*

Medicare guidance regarding the use of speech-language pathology student clinicians varies by site. It is recommended that you refer to [ASHA.org](https://www.asha.org) and your organization for specific guidance with regard to student observation/supervision requirements. Per ASHA, "Medicare allows limited billable interactions between students and beneficiaries. Medicare law describes the professions that are qualified to provide services to beneficiaries. Practitioners must be licensed by the state or have a credential such as the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence in those states without licensure."

*Does the university provide malpractice insurance for its students?*

YES: Each of our student clinicians is covered by a \$1,000,000 per occurrence/\$5,000,000 aggregate comprehensive general liability and malpractice insurance policy during the time that they are working with you. A Certificate of Liability will be provided by the University as proof of insurance coverage.

*What do I do if my student clinician is not performing to my expectation?*

As a clinical instructor, you will have an ongoing opportunity to provide feedback to your student clinician regarding their clinical work and overall professionalism. We encourage our off-campus instructors to share honest and supportive feedback with their student clinicians as an ongoing part of their interactions. In the unusual event that a student clinician is struggling with fundamental aspects of their clinical assignment, the SCSU clinical field coordinator will assist you in addressing their needs. With your input, the University will develop a specific clinical support plan to help the student remediate their performance. A student clinician will be removed immediately from your program at any time it is felt that their behavior or performance is judged unsafe or unacceptable.

*How will I evaluate my student clinician?*

Your most powerful evaluation is the daily feedback that you provide regarding all aspects of your student clinician's performance. Midway through the placement, we will ask you to complete a mid-term Clinical Competency Review in our online [TK-20 assessment system](#), and hold an in-person meeting with your student clinician to discuss your feedback and develop goals to support their continued development throughout the remainder of their placement. At the conclusion of their placement, we will ask you to utilize the same online Clinical Competency Review format for the final review, and meet again with your student to discuss their overall progress.

*Do we need a "contract" before we accept a student?*

We ask all off-campus clinical instructors and student clinicians to complete and sign a brief "Letter of Understanding" outlining attendance dates, assignments, and expectations. You can find a copy of this letter on the "Information for Off-campus Clinical Instructors" link on our webpage. Your facility may require an additional student affiliation agreement to be established with SCSU. In that event, the University will work with the appropriate people in your facility to establish a mutually acceptable agreement.

*How will SCSU faculty support me as I work with a student clinician?*

SCSU faculty and staff will partner with you in your task of mentoring our students. Our clinical field coordinator will maintain regular contact with you to discuss your student clinician's progress, and to support you in your role as clinical instructor. We encourage off campus clinical instructors to reach out with any and all questions, suggestions and/or concerns. Open and timely communication with you is our priority. Our faculty is at your service to share their experience, offer positive support and provide resources to help you succeed.