



Guided Observations Guidelines and Procedures

Observation is one of the significant learning experiences of students who are pursuing a career in communication sciences and disorders. The American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) requires that students complete a minimum of 25 hours of observation before their graduate program or before completing any clinical practices as a graduate clinician. This requirement may be met in a variety of ways. You are encouraged to distribute your observations across locations. At Valdosta State University, observation experiences are embedded as part of undergraduate coursework. If you did not attend Valdosta State University as a part of your undergraduate coursework or you did not complete 25 hours of observation, you can refer to one or more of the methods below to complete your hours.

*Volunteer hours are not observation hours.

Observation in off-campus clinical settings

Students may obtain observation hours in a variety of settings including schools, clinics, nursing homes, hospitals, and private practice. Observations at these outside sites should be under the direction of ASHA-certified clinicians (ASHA certification can be verified at <https://apps.asha.org/eweb/ashadynamicpage.aspx?site=ashacms&webcode=ccchome>). Students are responsible for coordinating their own outside observations and for keeping records of those observations. Please note some clinical sites require students to submit health/immunizations records, confidentiality agreements, trainings, etc., before observing, so please plan accordingly.

Record Keeping of Observation Hours

You are responsible for keeping track of all of your observation hours and having the appropriate ASHA-certified clinician sign off and approve these hours. There is a form to use for keeping track of all observation hours. Keep a copy of all documents as evidence of completing the observations. You are strongly advised to keep a folder with this information and, if needed, to make copies. The Department will NOT keep independent records of your observation hours. When applying to graduate school, we can provide you with a summary that you have completed all of your observation hours if requested, but will need your full record to approve.

Avenues to Obtain hours

- Master Clinician Network

<https://www.masterclinician.org/>

Students may sign up at [masterclinician.org](https://www.masterclinician.org/) for access to a large library of evaluation and treatment sessions across the age span and disorders. A one-year student membership fee is \$25 and paid online. We strongly recommend that you limit your hours of observation through MCN, as some graduate programs will not accept observation hours that are solely obtained online.

- Simucase Guided Observation Program

<https://www.simucase.com/observation>

With the Simucase Guided Observation Program, students can earn observation hours at their own pace in a safe virtual environment! SLP students can earn up to 25 observation hours.

- ASHA Certified Speech-Language Pathologists

Schedule a meeting with an SLP to request to observe therapy sessions. This is the responsibility of the student. Students must record and maintain their observation hours.

ASHA Requirements for Guided Observations

The 25 clinical observation hours **must**:

- Fall within the scope of practice of speech-language pathology
- Be guided AND approved in writing by a qualified clinical supervisor who holds current ASHA certification in speech-language pathology
 - To be considered a guided observation, there must be communication between the clinical educator and student observer
 - Passive experiences where students view sessions or videos on their own cannot be counted
 - Guided direction may occur simultaneously with the student's observation, be conducted verbally after the observation, or through review and approval of written reports or summaries submitted by the student

The 25 clinical observations **can**:

- Be conducted in a variety of service delivery settings (e.g., hospital, clinic, school, private practice, etc.)
- Be conducted across several types of clinical service (e.g., evaluation or treatment, children or adults, speech, language, cognitive-communication or swallowing disorder). **Students are encouraged to distribute their 25 hours over various types of clinical services and sessions.**
- Be conducted in person or via video. Students can observe “live” clinical sessions or they can observe the delivery of client services through guided, approved video recordings. All of these hours are acceptable as long as the live or videotaped services are guided by a certified SLP and documentation of time spent in supervised observation is verified by that professional in writing.