ROLE OF CLINICAL SUPERVISOR

The Clinical Supervisor plays a vital role in the practicum experience. The responsibility for guiding and training an inexperienced student to become a competent professional is great. Those Supervisors who are willing to provide the amount of time, effort and energy required of this endeavor are to be commended; they perform an invaluable service to the students they train, the University, and their profession. (See Appendix E for suggested competencies for effective clinical supervision.) The DSHS faculty and students appreciate these unpaid supervisors, who are vital to each student’s professional development!

Orientation

One of the first responsibilities of the Supervisor should be to provide the student with an orientation to the physical facilities of the practicum site. The following should also be included:

1. Rules and regulations that apply to employees (e.g., dress requirements, hours of work, use of the phone, etc.)
2. Forms and billing procedures used by the practicum site
3. Materials and equipment available for use
4. Program functions and services
5. An introduction to other staff members and explanation of their roles
6. Exposure control plan of the facility

- The student should be asked to prepare a list of his/her expectations from this practicum experience.
- The Supervisor should prepare a list of duties, competencies, etc. that will be expected of the student.
- Both should then discuss the lists and clarify any differences.

Evaluations

Informal evaluations of the student's performance should be made on a regular basis in both written and oral form, allowing the student to become immediately aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses in clinical practice. These informal evaluations should be relative to supervisory observations. During an observation, the Supervisor may wish to use the form found in Appendix E to provide written feedback to the student. The form is a useful tool, as it provides a framework for communication while enhancing the delivery of services through documentation of needs and changes. For SLP students, weekly conferences with the student are also recommended as a means of providing feedback. For audiology students, some feedback is typically provided at the time of each diagnostic evaluation session and report, with more extensive feedback provided at midterm and final (end of semester) conferences.

Amount of Supervision

The Division follows the directives of the CAA for Speech Pathology and Audiology. The Division has been accredited by the ASHA CAA in both Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology since December 1, 1988. The Board requires that practicum observation be no less than 25% of client contact time for treatment and no less than 50% of client contact time for diagnostics. All sites must follow these guidelines. Supervisors are asked to keep a record of the time they spend in direct observation, as this information will be needed for the student’s Supervised Clock Hours record form at the end of the semester and is required by ASHA at the time the student applies for certification. (See Appendix B for ASHA interpretations of Certification Standards.)

Site Visits

Observations by the DSHS Practicum Coordinators serve several purposes for the student, the site Supervisor, and the Division. They offer an opportunity for the student to discuss with the Coordinator and site Supervisor his or her clinical progress and training needs. It is important for the Supervisor to receive continued communication from the Division regarding expectations for training and interest in how the site relates to the development of the student's professional expertise, permitting the burden of training to be shared with the Division which assumes primary responsibility for the student. The Division and students, in turn, benefit from the knowledge and assurance that this expertise is being developed according to approved standards of quality as written in the Handbook. There is no set
policy for the number of site visits; they vary according to student and site needs. If a student is not receiving necessary support, training, or experience from the practicum site supervisor he/she needs to let the appropriate Practicum Coordinator know as early as possible in the experience.