

Practicum versus Internship

Students majoring in Communication Disorders complete three semesters of clinical practicum, while completing academic coursework at the same time. During the first semester the student only takes an academic core of courses, including CD 5661 Diagnostic Process, CD 5669 Phonological Disorders, CD 5675 Language Disorders in Preschool Children, CD 5676 Language Disorders in School-Aged Children and Adolescents, and CD 5731 Neurogenic Disorders I: Overview of Aphasia, Apraxia, Dysarthria, and Dysphagia. The fifth semester is an internship experience, which is a semester of strictly clinical work. The student does not take any academic coursework during the internship experience.

Students begin their clinical experience in the Appalachian State University Communication Disorders Clinic where they usually accumulate 50 to 75 hours per semester (35 to 50 in the summer semester). During subsequent semesters students may have assignments either at the Communications Disorders Clinic or at selected off-campus sites. Internship is the clinical capstone experience. It is a practicum experience which allows the student the opportunity to apply many concepts learned in the program, both from the classroom and from the clinical practicum, to a real-world work setting.

Students also receive a practicum placement in the schools and complete the placement during the third, fourth, or fifth semesters of graduate study. This practicum placement consists of half time teaching under the supervision of a competent and experienced ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist. See Appendix A for specific details concerning practicum in the schools.

The Clinical Internship practicum is completed during the last semester in the Communication Disorders Program. It provides master's level students with expanded opportunities to develop proficiency in the practice of speech-language pathology. Students are eligible to enroll in Internship upon demonstration of the following:

1. Completion of all required pre-professional and professional courses in Communication Disorders;
2. Completion of at least 150 clinical clock hours of graduate practicum; and,
3. Approval of the Communication Disorders Program faculty.

Students may elect to divide the internship in order to work in two different sites. For example, students may work half-time in the public schools to fulfill requirements for a teaching license in speech-language impairment and half-time in a clinical setting. The duration of the Internship is 16 weeks during the Fall and Spring semesters, and 10-12 weeks in the Summer. Students work at the practicum site everyday, Monday through Friday, 40-hours per week. For some students it also may mean some weekend work.