

Department of Communication Disorders Student Assistance Plan (SAP)

Background

Effective January 1, 2005, students who are working toward certification in speech-language pathology (i.e. the CCC-SLP) must demonstrate and document prescribed competencies in terms of knowledge and skills outcomes (i.e. the Graduate Learning Objectives). The knowledge and skills outcomes are addressed throughout the student's undergraduate and graduate curricula, and are recorded on Knowledge and Skills Acquisition (KASA) forms. Knowledge outcomes are typically addressed in the student's academic courses, and skills outcomes are typically addressed in the student's clinical practica. As a student progresses through the graduate program of study, the knowledge outcomes that were addressed in a given course are documented on a KASA Checklist. Skill outcomes are documented on a separate skills acquisition form. The expectation is that the student will have mastered all of the knowledge outcomes and most of the skills outcomes by the time the graduate degree is awarded.

Overview of Knowledge and Skills Outcomes Assessment

At conclusion of each course taken at the graduate level, students receive not only a course grade, but they are also evaluated on each of the individual knowledge and/or skill outcomes addressed in the course. Typically if a student receives an "A" in a course, it is assumed that all knowledge and/or skill outcomes in that course were achieved. If a student receives a "B" in a course, it is possible that some outcomes were achieved, whereas other outcomes were not achieved. If a student receives a grade of "C" or lower, it is assumed that no outcomes were achieved. Regardless of the course grade received, students must meet an acceptable level of performance on all knowledge objectives and most skill objectives prior to receiving the graduate degree.

This student assistance plan addresses situations where a student must complete remedial work in order to achieve a specific knowledge and/or skill outcome that was not achieved during the regular course offering. In addition, there are other requirements for the graduate degree that must be met (e.g., passing comprehensive examinations, completing a capstone research project, etc.). This assistance plan addresses a student's failure to achieve or complete any requirements for the graduate degree; and, it provides the student with an opportunity to complete remedial activities leading to successful achievement or completion of the requirements. However, failure to meet the requirements of the student assistance plan in a timely manner may result in dismissal from the graduate program.

The Student Assistance Plan

A Student Assistance Plan (SAP) may be required for a number of reasons:

- * failure to achieve some or all knowledge or skills outcomes addressed in a particular course or clinical practicum and for which there will be no other opportunity to acquire the knowledge or skill in subsequent courses or practica;

- note that the KASA course checklist indicates which knowledge outcomes are addressed in each course and how they are assessed to assist the student in documenting their progress or deficiencies; this checklist is completed by the course instructor at the conclusion of the course and placed in the student's academic record.

- note that skill outcomes are typically demonstrated in clinical practica and the student should monitor their achievement of the skill outcomes by updating the KASA Skills Form at the conclusion of each semester of clinical practica and externship as he/she meets with the clinical supervisors at the end of each semester;

- note that no knowledge or skill outcomes for a particular course or practica may be considered achieved if the student receives a grade of "C" in that course or practica.

* failure to demonstrate oral or written skills for effective practice as a speech-language pathologist (indicated by ratings of 3 or lower on pertinent items on Tx and Dx Student Evaluation Forms)

* failure to demonstrate appropriate professionalism and/or interpersonal skills (indicated by a score of less than 14/15 on Tx and Dx Student Evaluation Forms)

* failure to achieve a passing score on any summative assessment examination required by the department;

* failure to successfully complete the capstone research requirement for the graduate degree;

* failure to successfully complete (grade C or lower) any required externship experience;

Determining KASA Outcomes Progress

At the conclusion of each course, the instructor will place a completed KASA checklist form for the course in the student's academic record, verifying which (if any) knowledge outcomes have been achieved. If it is noted that a certain outcome was not achieved, and there is no opportunity for that knowledge to be achieved in any subsequent undergraduate or graduate course, then a SAP will be required to determine the means by which the student may achieve the deficient knowledge outcomes.

At the conclusion of each clinical practicum, the clinical supervisor(s) determines with the student which skill outcomes have been achieved using the KASA Skills Form. Since clinical practica are provided every semester of graduate study including the externship experiences, typically failure to achieve a skill outcome does not automatically trigger a SAP because the student will have additional opportunities to achieve the skill outcomes.

At the conclusion of the student's final on-campus clinical practicum (typically during the summer semester of the 1st year of study), the clinic coordinator will review all of the student's clinical skills outcomes. If it is determined that a student is excessively deficient in the number of achieved skill outcomes, the student will be required to develop a SAP and successfully complete the requirements of the SAP before the student may begin the externship experiences.

At the conclusion of the first externship experience but before the second externship experience, the externship supervisor will review the student's record of achievement of skills outcomes. If at this point, there are skills outcomes that have not been achieved, the student must develop a SAP to address the deficiencies. In some cases, it may be possible for the student to incorporate the SAP into the final externship experience. However, the externship supervisor determines whether the deficiencies may be addressed through the

final externship experience or if they should be addressed in an alternate manner. The student must abide by this determination.

At the conclusion of the final semester of graduate study, the student must schedule two KASA review meetings, one with the academic advisor and one with the clinic coordinator. The academic advisor will verify that all knowledge outcomes have been achieved. The clinic coordinator will verify that the skills outcomes have been achieved. In addition, the requirements of any SAP's must have been met at this time in order for a student to graduate. If the student exhibits any deficiencies or uncompleted SAP's, the student may not graduate until these are addressed.

Development and Stipulations of a Student Assistance Plan

If a student is required to develop an SAP in the manner described in the previous section, the student should meet with the instructor (for courses) or clinic coordinator or externship coordinator (for clinical practica) to develop the SAP. A SAP form must be completed and retained in the student's academic record (Appendix A).

This plan should list the following:

1. the knowledge or skills outcomes that are deficient
2. the activities that will be completed by the student to address the deficiencies
3. the means by which successful completion of the SAP will be assessed
4. the time frame for completion of the SAP

This form must be signed by the student, the instructor or supervisor, as well as the student's academic advisor. The student is required to enroll in a 1-hour credit of independent study for each student assistant plan. If the student "achieves" the knowledge or skill, then the student will receive an "A" in the independent study. If the student does not "achieve" the knowledge or skills addressed in the SAP but shows evidence of emerging knowledge or skills, the student may receive one incomplete. In this case, the student will have one additional semester to complete the requirements of the SAP. However, if the student fails to make acceptable progress toward completion of the SAP in the original semester or fails to complete the requirements of the SAP during the second semester, the student will receive a grade of "F" for the independent study, effectively ending the student's graduate study.

When a student enters the graduate program (including students from other undergraduate programs), the student's assigned academic advisor will review the student's academic transcript to determine what knowledge and/or skills outcomes were achieved in the student's undergraduate program of study. Students from other programs should be prepared to provide the advisor with course syllabi of all communication disorders courses taken at the undergraduate level. The student must then plan accordingly to ensure that all knowledge and skills outcomes are acquired during the graduate program.

The student is allowed to address only one SAP at a time and maintain a full load of graduate courses and clinical practicum in a semester (i.e. typically 12 hours). If the student must address more than one SAP in a semester, the credit load must be reduced by 3 hours for every 2 SAP's in progress.

Documentation and Appeals Process

The acquisition of knowledge and skills outcomes must be documented on the department-approved KASA Knowledge and Skill record forms. If a SAP was required and successfully completed, the student may indicate the SAP as the means by which the objective was achieved and the SAP form is retained in the student's record.

If at any point, the student wishes to appeal a particular aspect of the SAP (e.g. the plan itself, the means of assessment, or the final grade or rating), the same procedures will be followed as for any "grade" appeal. These procedures are outlined in separate documents and may be initiated through the student's academic advisor.

APPENDIX A

Student Assistance Plan (SAP) Form

Student _____ Date _____

Describe reason necessitating a Student Assistance Plan and knowledge or skill outcome addressed in plan:

Describe the required activities for meeting the goals of the Student Assistance Plan:

Describe the method and criteria by which the student's performance on the Student Assistance Plan will be assessed:

Indicate the semester (or other deadline) by which the Student Assistance Plan should be completed:

Faculty Instructor or Clinical Supervisor

Student

Student's Academic Advisor

Date Completed _____ Verified By _____

**A copy of this form should be attached to the KASA Outcomes Documentation Form.