

Supervision of Interns in the Public Schools

IASHA requirements:

ASHA requires that students be supervised (i.e. with supervisor observing in the room or via one way glass) for a minimum of 25% of all direct service activities. All supervisors (the assigned supervisor in addition to anyone to whom the responsibility has been delegated, even on a temporary basis) should have their CCCs.

UW requirements:

Supervisors should allow interns to take on greater responsibility as the internship goes on so that by the last four weeks or so (based on supervisor discretion, of course), the student has taken over 100% of the caseload and its associated responsibilities (see below for guidelines on caseload numbers). While interns may have taken over complete responsibility, the level of supervision required by ASHA still applies. Remember, interns are still students.

In addition, as direct-line-of-sight supervision is faded towards the end of the internship, a certified SLP must be on-site/in-the-building at all times when the intern is working with students. If supervision duties are to be delegated to another SLP who is on site during the time the supervisor is off-site, that SLP must also have their CCCs, per ASHA regulations.

So, this means that if an SLP has to cancel therapy in one building to do an assessment in another building, the intern should go with their supervisor and (hopefully) help complete that assessment. Part of the intern experience should be to take over all responsibilities associated with being a school SLP – if managing/changing schedules so as to follow the law and provide services to children is part of that, then that is what the intern needs to be doing as well. If the SLP plans on providing make-up services for services missed, the intern could participate in that experience as well.

In addition, if a supervisor is going to a conference during the time the intern is at his/her site, calls in sick or takes personal days, the intern should not be seeing children in his/her supervisor's absence unless there is another certified SLP on site to provide supervision. These off days might be good times for the intern to visit other sites and programs. Any unusual situations, such as supervisor illness or student illness, that may result in limited clock hour accrual, should be reported immediately so we can help to find the student additional clinical experiences.

State laws:

Interns should not be working with children without a certified SLP available on site (not necessarily in the room) as this would violate state laws governing who can serve a child/adult without supervision for evaluation and treatment of people with communication disorders. SLPA's fall under a separate category, in terms of duties and regulations, and are not considered to be students, so the rules for supervision of SLPA's do not apply here. For example, an SLPA is not allowed to alter a treatment plan without direction from an SLP, whereas, we expect students to alter treatment plans since they are training to be SLPs.

Think of the intern as taking over all of your job responsibilities, including phone calls, meetings, paperwork etc. It is reasonable to expect your intern to manage a caseload of about 50 kids (workload is a better formula, but many districts have not adopted this model). If you have more than 50 kids on your caseload, you (the SLP) may need to be responsible for the other portion of the caseload in addition to your supervision of the intern. In addition, you may determine that some cases should be managed solely by the supervisor due to legal proceedings or other issues. Having a student observe these sessions, and take data can be invaluable. Please use your discretion with regards to student responsibilities above 50 and with special children on your caseload.