**Doctor of**

**Audiology:**

**Au.D. Degree**

DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

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**Doctoral Student Handbook**

Doctor of Audiology

Date Effective: August 2020

Welcome to Grand Valley State University and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The information contained in this handbook is intended to help you understand your degree program and the relevant regulations, policies and procedures. The conditions set forth in this document are applicable to all students who begin their doctoral program after effective date noted above. In addition to this handbook’s information, you are also expected to comply with the policies set forth in the Graduate Catalog. This handbook serves as a guide to successfully completing your Au.D. degree and is a supplemental source of information to any university policy.

As a student in the Doctor of Audiology Program, you are granted the privilege of…

… working with certain patient groups, under appropriate supervision

… an educational partnership with your faculty

… an education that prepares you to practice effectively in a changing healthcare landscape

The privileges granted to you come with the obligation to…

… maintain a professional demeanor, inside and outside the practice setting, as you are an ambassador of the audiology program whether you are aware of that fact or not

… know, accept, and agree to abide by the ASHA Code of Ethics

… maintain an attitude of compassion and respect and to place the welfare of patients first

The faculty members of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders represent the other half of the partnership in your education, and include full-time educators as well as members of the professional community who serve as adjunct faculty and clinical preceptors. These individuals are committed to providing you with the knowledge necessary to help you successfully complete your degree program and to qualify for relevant state and national credentials.

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# Overview of Au.D. Program

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Grand Valley State University offers the Au.D. degree program, which is a clinical doctoral degree program. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for entry-level practice in Audiology, providing opportunity for students to develop knowledge and skills across the entire breadth and depth of the scope of practice. Students that successfully complete the degree program should meet all qualifications to be eligible for Licensure in Audiology awarded by the State of Michigan. The Au.D. degree program has been awarded Candidacy Accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA).

The curriculum and other degree requirements are the product of years of planning, discussion, and defending of proposals at the institutional, state, and national levels. The resulting degree program is a comprehensive and rigorous program of study that encourages the synthesis of information across didactic coursework, clinical experience, and application of relevant research. The primary objective is to educate students so as to be competent entry-level practitioners. As a clinical doctoral degree program, there is no requirement or allowance for an intensive research project. Students who wish to pursue research careers should consider a post-Au.D. Ph.D. program.

Students in the Au.D. program should be aware that some of the clinical placement sites in which they are required to complete clinical practica in order to graduate will require the student to produce a current criminal records check. It is the student’s responsibility to arrange for the check, to keep it current in order to comply with the requirements of the various clinical sites, and to advise the university and department if the status of the student’s criminal record changes at any time during the student’s program. In addition, some clinical sites will require specific immunizations and other requirements. Students should refer to the clinical policies and procedures for more information. Students in the Au.D. program should also be aware that travel to clinical sites is a required component and it is the student’s responsibility to have reliable transportation to/from these sites.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students with guidance for successfully completing their Au.D. degree.

# Financial Assistance

Financial aid may be available through the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the form of graduate assistantships, with a limited number of assistantships granted each year to exceptionally qualified students. Assistantships are granted based solely on academic merit; students’ financial situations are not considered.

# Advising

The Graduate Program Director for Audiology advises all students in the Au.D. program. Although formal advising is scheduled periodically throughout the academic program, it is the student’s responsibility to seek advising as needed. The Au.D. curriculum is a lock-step program that does not allow for flexibility or selection of electives. However, the student’s advisor will assist with individual needs and interests, discuss degree academic and clinical requirements for the degree, and assist in preparing for licensure and available national credentialing.

The Au.D. program is designed to prepare students as generalist practitioners that could competently practice in almost any area of audiology. Students that develop an interest in a particular area of specialization in audiology are encouraged to discuss potential ways of strengthening their exposure in that particular area.

# Academic Degree Requirements

Students must successfully complete four academic degree requirements to earn the Au.D. degree. These academic degree requirements are:

1. **CURRICULUM**: Successful completion of prescribed didactic and clinical coursework. The curriculum for the Au.D, as determined by the departmental faculty, currently comprises 84 semester credit hours. It is possible for the exact number of credits to change during a student's program as modifications in the curriculum are made. Completion of any specific number of credit hours does not in itself guarantee the granting of the Au.D. Completion of the program typically requires 9 semesters.
2. **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION**: Successful acquisition of all knowledge and skills areas required by the program must be documented and approved by the faculty in order to qualify for the Au.D. degree. Students are expected to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and skills through academic coursework, lab experiences, and clinical experiences, with all areas being acquired by the time the student approaches the end of the third year of the program of study. Failure to acquire all knowledge and skills to specified level of mastery could extend the length of the student’s program.
3. **ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS**: Satisfactory completion of the annual assessment held at the end of each academic year. The most rigorous of the annual assessments is at the completion of the second year, at which time a comprehensive examination of the student’s ability to synthesize information across didactic and clinical coursework must be successfully completed.
4. **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**: An essential component in the academic training for entry into a clinical field is the individual’s professional behavior when interacting with patients, faculty, and other students. Evaluation of professional behavior is an ongoing process. Just as with the other three academic degree requirements, a student must successfully fulfill this requirement (i.e. demonstrate appropriate professional behaviors and attitudes as judged by the faculty and extern supervisors) in order to continue in the program.

## 1. Curriculum

The Au.D. coursework falls into three areas: prerequisite coursework, didactic coursework, and clinical coursework.

### Prerequisite Coursework

The Graduate Program Director for Audiology will assist students in determining if their undergraduate study included all the necessary prerequisite coursework. The program at GVSU was specifically designed to accommodate individuals from diverse backgrounds which creates a rich dynamic allowing students to benefit from the perspectives and insights of those with differing backgrounds.

### Didactic Coursework

A majority of the required credit hours are for didactic coursework. Student requests to transfer graduate credit hours taken at another university to be applied to the Au.D. degree are discouraged and typically not approved.

### Clinical Coursework

As a clinical degree program, the audiology program requires students to gain a substantial amount of clinical experience and demonstrate competence in a number of clinical skills areas. Students progress through a series of clinical experiences – fieldwork, practicums, and internships – comprising a practical continuum from on-campus to off-campus, from part-time to full-time, and from dependent to independent. The clinical sequence is structured so as to educate entry-level clinicians, prepared to practice in most areas of audiology. Students will be assigned to as many different types of clinical experiences as possible. However, if a student has a particular interest in a specific area of audiology (e.g. pediatric population, etc.), the Clinical Instructor in Audiology will attempt to accommodate these interests, considering the need for students to obtain a variety of experiences.

The Au.D. program comprises a lock-step curriculum with little or no room for elective coursework. Please note that a curriculum is a constant work in progress, with changes made each year to improve delivery of the program. As a result, the student's final program may deviate slightly from the one provided at the time of initial advising.

### Practicum Experience

All students must complete the clinical sequence of fieldwork, practicums, and internships as part of their curriculum. The practical experience is an opportunity for students to actually work in the field while gaining hands-on experience in working with individuals with concerns related to the scope of practice for audiologists. Students will begin their direct client contact experience during the first year of coursework and will continue with direct client contact and practicum experience each semester through the completion of the program. The exact nature of the practical experiences advances in scope of practice and independence of the clinician throughout the course of study, with the final year of the program being especially weighted toward accumulating clinical experience and mastering clinical skills. Overall, each student will acquire an aggregate of well over 12 months of full-time clinical experience, comprising experience of sufficient depth and breadth to achieve the knowledge and skills outcomes required by the program and for appropriate credentialing.

The Audiology program has implemented a clinical internship experience during the final 12 months of the student’s program that will most likely be located some distance from campus. Students are encouraged to consider early in the program sites at which they may wish to accomplish this requirement, along with transportation needs and housing arrangements for the internship.

### Case Assignments

The Coordinator of Clinical Education in Audiology will make all case assignments in coordination with the entire Audiology faculty and the broader CSD faculty. As part of the student's professional training, he/she is expected to accept all clients assigned as clinical needs dictate. Specific requests for off-campus placements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted to the Coordinator of Clinical Education in Audiology and approved by the entire Audiology Faculty.

### Unsatisfactory Grades

When students receive less than a B- grade in practicum coursework, the clinical skills acquired during that enrollment will not count toward the clinical skills acquisition required by the program. Practicum coursework grades are held to the same standard to which all graduate courses are held.

### Practicum Performance

If a practicum preceptor experiences significant problems/concerns with a student’s practicum performance, the Coordinator of Clinical Education in Audiology will conduct a review of the preceptor’s concerns, after which the Graduate Program Director for Audiology will provide an appropriate forum for sharing the information with the audiology faculty. In response to this review, the audiology faculty may take one of the following actions:

* Specific written expectations for student performance may be presented to the student
* Modification of practicum requirements and clinical hours to be awarded may be imposed
* Termination of practicum experience (if a practicum is not completed the student will receive no academic credit)

## 2. Knowledge and Skills Acquisition

Students are responsible for maintaining their own records of clinical progress and documentation of clinical clock hours. This includes documentation of knowledge and skills acquisition. The current standards for CAA accreditation require that applicants demonstrate specific knowledge and skill outcomes that are based upon an extensive practice analysis. All knowledge areas are directly tied to program coursework and are verified as being achieved by appropriate course and program formative and summative assessments. All skill areas are tracked across the diverse clinical assignments throughout the student’s program of study and are verified as being achieved through direct observation and evaluation by internal and external practicum preceptors. Each of the required knowledge and skills areas are listed in Appendix A, along with the didactic or practicum experience(s) in which each are achieved. At the end of each academic year the student and his/her academic advisor review completed coursework. At the end of each semester the student provides the Clinical Instructor in Audiology one copy of a signed summary form and retains one copy for personal records. An overall tally of clock hour accumulation is kept semester by semester by each student. A specific number of clock hours is not associated with each enrollment credit.

## 3. Annual Assessments

At the end of every academic year, students are required to have a formative assessment of their performance. The purpose of the assessments is to evaluate students’ performance and progression through the didactic and clinical portions of the program. Assessment can vary in different years, and the following sections explain how each year’s assessment is usually performed.

### First Year Assessment

Before the completion of the spring semester the Graduate Program Director for Audiology will schedule a meeting with audiology faculty to discuss each student's academic progress during the previous year. The purpose of this meeting is to 1) assess the student’s extent and synthesis of didactic and clinical knowledge, and 2) provide feedback as to the faculty’s perception of the student’s performance over the previous year. Assessment activities vary from year to year, and could include a student presentation, preparation of a written document, demonstration of clinical skills, completion of a formal written examination, or some other activity. Students will be notified in advance of any special preparation. Following the first year assessment, students receiving a favorable decision will be notified verbally as well as in a letter from the Graduate Program Director of the results of the assessment. This communication may also convey any faculty concerns or positive feedback to the student. Students receiving an unfavorable decision will receive a letter outlining faculty concerns and steps for how the student may remediate these concerns. The student may also be asked to appear before a panel of the Audiology faculty or to meet with the Graduate Program Director to discuss their future within the program. The purpose of the letter and meeting is to address the faculty's concerns and options that are available to the student.

### Second Year Assessment

The second year assessment includes the following components:

* Knowledge and Skills Acquisition Review
* Verification of Responsible Conduct of Research training completion
* Qualifying Examination

Each of the components of the second year assessment is discussed in greater detail below:

#### *Knowledge and Skills Acquisition Review*

At the end of each semester of practicum, clinical supervisors will rate audiology students in each skill area as to whether the skill is emerging or at a competent level. As students approach the completion of their second year, a careful review of all knowledge and skills areas will identify areas that still need to be strengthened over the final year of internship. Ultimately, prior to graduation, the student must demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in each and every knowledge and clinical skill area.

#### *Qualifying Examination*

Prior to the completion of the second year, each student must complete a doctoral qualifying examination. The examination consists of two major parts: a written and an oral evaluation. The objective of the examination is to cause the student to integrate and synthesize information across all didactic and clinical coursework so as to be able to solve real-world problems in audiology. Therefore, although it is important for the student to review information presented in their coursework taken during the previous two years, in order to be successful the student must be able to think and problem-solve across course boundaries and across didactic and clinical experience. The examination is conducted by the audiology faculty and may require information specific to a particular course, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, or from a body of knowledge with which a doctoral student, nearing the completion of his/her didactic coursework, should be familiar.

Written Portion of the Examination: The written examination requires 16 hours of writing spread over four days. The audiology faculty will determine how the examination questions will be spread over the four-day test period and will inform the student of the examination plan at least four weeks before the examination date. The audiology faculty evaluates the written responses from the examination and students receive a decision of either “Pass” or “Fail within ten working days of the last test day. A grade of “Pass” does not necessarily imply that the student demonstrated perfect understanding of the subject matter, but only that he/she showed sufficient depth and/or breadth of understanding so as to not warrant a “Fail.” Detailed feedback is NOT typically provided at this time as students will have the opportunity to defend their responses in the oral defense. However, special conditions may be, and frequently are, attached to the “pass,” including those specifying deficiencies that must be met before proceeding to the next step. If these special conditions are not met to the satisfaction of the faculty, the student will receive a “Fail.” Students who do not pass the written portion may repeat it one time. The rewritten examination must be taken within 6 months of failure of the initial attempt.

Oral Defense of the Written Examination: The oral portion of the examination provides another opportunity in different communication mode for the student to demonstrate his/her depth, breadth, and synthesis of knowledge. It also allows students to clarify, elaborate, and expand upon their written responses. The audiology faculty will determine whether or not a student successfully completes the oral defense portion of the examination and students are notified of the examination results at the completion of the oral defense.

Students who successfully complete the oral defense have passed their qualifying examination. Students who do not successfully complete the oral defense will be instructed by the Graduate Program Director as to the next step. The outcome may be to 1) decide that the student was not able to demonstrate adequate knowledge and synthesis and/or clarify the written answers sufficiently and require the student to repeat the written examination, or 2) decide that it was only the oral defense that was weak and require that the student repeat the oral exam, or 3) impose special conditions as determined by the faculty, or 4) award a “Fail” of the oral defense. Again, the repeat oral examination must be taken within 6 months of failure of the initial oral exam. A second “Fail” on either the written or oral examinations constitutes a failure of the qualifying examination and the student will be dismissed from the program.

**Writtens**

**Repeat Written**

**Dismissal from Program**

**Orals**

**Repeat Orals**

Committee Decision

**Examination Complete**

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

Fail

Fail

Fail

Fail

*Typical flowchart for the qualifying examination*

At the successful completion of all portions of the second year assessment the Graduate Program Director will notify students that they are considered a Doctoral Candidate. Students who have not successfully completed all portions of the second year assessment will be notified in a letter from the Graduate Program Director of the status of the student and addressing any faculty concerns or positive feedback to the student.

### Third Year Assessment

The third year assessment is multifaceted and consists of:

* Sit for the PRAXIS Examination. The PRAXIS is a national examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Audiology students are required to take the audiology Specialty Area Test as part of the degree requirements for the AuD. Students are strongly discouraged from taking the PRAXIS exam prior to the Fall semester of their third year.
* Satisfactory completion of all didactic course work and practical experiences
* Knowledge and Skills Acquisition Review (similar to second year assessment)
* Audit of the academic file to assure that all required materials are present
* Submission of Application for a Graduate/Doctoral Degree. A degree requirements checklist and the application for the degree are located at The Graduate School website.

## 4. Professional Behavior

Professional behaviors and attitudes are attributes and characteristics that are not explicitly part of a profession’s core of knowledge and technical skills, but are nevertheless required for success in the profession. Breaches of professional behavior in the classroom or in practicum, as determined by CSD Department faculty, may result in dismissal from the program.

Professional behaviors include:

* 1. regular and timely attendance in courses and practicum
  2. actively engaging in learning activities
  3. exhibiting respect for others and the opinions of others
  4. facilitating the learning process for all
  5. reflecting a high standard of health service through verbal interaction, dress, and appropriate interpersonal skills
  6. maintaining appropriate confidentiality in communications with patients, faculty, students, and staff
  7. demonstrating respect for individuals of diverse backgrounds
  8. using appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication
  9. behaving ethically and legally in all aspects of one’s life, including situations outside of GVSU

# Academic Retention and Dismissal

In the event that a student’s performance does not meet the department’s standards, they may either be dismissed from the program, or be required to repeat a course.

1. Any grade below C will result in dismissal from the program.
2. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA. Individual course grades of B-, although passing, provide a numerical value of 2.7 (not 3.0) and therefore must be offset by grades in other courses of greater than B. If a student’s cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program.
3. Only *one* grade below B- (i.e., C+ or C) will be permitted. If a student earns a second grade below B-, the student will be dismissed from the program.
4. Students are expected to earn a grade of B- or above in all clinical coursework (HRG 570, 670, and 770). When students receive a C+ or C in clinical coursework the student will repeat the course *the next time it is offered*, if this is the first grade below B-. If this is not the first grade below B- in clinical coursework, the student will be dismissed from the program. Note: this *will* result in extending the students’ program. The course may only be repeated once. If a grade below B- is earned when the course is repeated, the student will be dismissed from the program.
5. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that Health Compliance Requirements (HCR) have been met at all times. Students who are out of compliance with HCR will be suspended from clinical placements until compliant. Such suspensions will adversely impact clinical course grades.
6. The following situations will result in dismissal from the program:
   1. Evidence of felony conviction.
   2. Evidence of a misdemeanor conviction that limits clinical placement opportunities.
   3. A unanimous vote of the CSD Faculty following report, with documentation, of an egregious infraction of the GVSU Student Code, the University policy on academic dishonesty, HIPAA, or the ASHA Code of Ethics.

# Licensure in the State of Michigan

A professional license is required to practice Audiology in the State of Michigan, as is true for most states. Practicing Audiology without a license is against the law! Licensure in Michigan is awarded by the Department of Health Professions Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology. Regulations governing licensure are established by the Board. Students may contact the Board to obtain an application and a copy of the state regulations by writing:

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

Board of Speech Language Pathology

P.O. Box 30004

Lansing, MI 48909

(517) 373-1820

<https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334_72600_72603_27529_31491---,00.html>

For information regarding licensure in other states, consult ASHA’s web page to obtain contact information for that state: http://www.asha.org/advocacy/state/

Michigan requires state licensure regardless of work setting; however, other states with

licensure laws may not require licensure to work in a public school setting, or may require a separate license/teaching certificate.

The Au.D. program at GVSU prepares students to qualify for Audiology licensure in the State of Michigan.

# Clinical Certification

Clinical certification is not required in order to practice Audiology in Michigan and most, if not all, other states. Certification is voluntary, and signals to the public and consumers of your services that you have met rigorous academic preparation and subscribe to high standards of ethical conduct and professionalism. Certification in Audiology has been available for a number of decades through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). In recent years the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) has also offered clinical certification for Audiologists through the American Board of Audiology (ABA). Many states will grant licensure to an applicant who possesses clinical certification through one or either of the professional associations without having to document other licensure requirements. Certification is typically available to Audiologists either with or without membership in the professional association. More information on certification is available from the following sources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

2200 Research Boulevard

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Phone: 301-296-5700

<http://www.asha.org/about/credentialing/cert/>

American Board of Audiology

11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300

Reston, Virginia 20190

Phone: 800-881-5410

<http://www.americanboardofaudiology.org/>

The Au.D. program at GVSU does not explicitly prepare students to meet ASHA standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A) or AAA standards for certification through ABA.

# Student Code

Standards of conduct are established in order to foster a community and environment where the mission, vision and values of Grand Valley State University (hereafter “University”) can flourish. These standards are embodied within a set core of values that include **integrity, community, inclusion & equity, respect,** and **responsibility**. The University conduct process exists to protect the interests of the community and to challenge those whose behavior falls outside of these values and our policies.

Any question regarding the interpretation or application of the Student Code will be answered by the Dean of Students. All students and the institution will be bound by the Dean’s answer.

Compliance with the GVSU Student Code is good practice for students in audiology who will be entering a professional field of practice that subscribes to a rigorous Code of Ethics.

Websites:

GVSU Student Code:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/policies/category.htm?categoryId=2C706898-FBBE-C50F-09A6D62DEA20957B>

ASHA Code of Ethics:

<https://www.asha.org/Code-of-Ethics/>

AAA Code of Ethics:

<http://www.audiology.org/resources/documentlibrary/Pages/codeofethics.aspx>

**Responsible Conduct of Research**: As per the Graduate School policy on responsible conduct of research, all students will complete CITI modules prior to the midpoint of their academic program (midterm of 5th semester), which are accessed here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/rcr/online-rcr-training-and-certification-29.htm>. Documentation of completion of the CITI modules must be emailed to the Graduate Program Director of Audiology by midterm of the 5th semester of the program.

# Complaint Procedure

Concerns about a course or faculty member should be handled with that faculty member whenever possible. If a faculty member does not address the concerns adequately or if it is not reasonable to approach the faculty member, students are advised to take their concerns to the Department Chair.

If the complaint is programmatic in nature (as opposed to complaints involving a course or faculty member), the complaint should be directed to the Graduate Program Director of Audiology.

For concerns about matters that could affect compliance with standards of accreditation, students or other interested parties can contact the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) directly:

Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

2200 Research Boulevard #310

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Phone: 800-498-2071

Email: [accreditation@asha.org](mailto:accreditation@asha.org)