

The Common Timeline of Audiology Clinical Education Network

The ACEN was organized by audiology practices, clinics and institutions with the goals of (1) standardizing elements of the externship process and (2) to share best clinical educational practices across in an effort to further improve student outcomes. One of the most common concerns of the externship sites, academic institutions, and students was the timeline associated with the application, interview, and offer and acceptance process of the externship. To this end, the network identified a common timeline as an element for standardization of the externship. The purpose of a common timeline is to increase the efficiency for students, academic programs and the externship sites.

The clinical externship sites that participate with the ACEN voluntarily agree to follow a common timeline for the application, interview, and offer and acceptance process. Standardizing the externship requires that all stakeholders engage in the process with a common understanding of the expectations necessary for success. Thus, this document was developed to provide clinical sites, students and academic programs with guidance regarding the expectations for the stakeholders.

The ACEN is focused on those elements of the externship process that are within the purview of the clinical sites proper. The ACEN recognizes and respects the role of the academic programs as the primary entities responsible for assuring students comply with the program's requirements for the externship experience and, subsequently, for graduation. As such, the ACEN is an enthusiastic partner with the academic programs to identify additional elements of the externship process that can be standardized.

Guidance for Engagement with the Common Timeline
Version 2.0
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1. Introduction to the ACEN Common Timeline for the Externship

- 1.1. The Common Timeline is sponsored by the participating practices and institutions of the Audiology Clinical Education Network, an organization founded for the purpose of promoting standardized processes for the audiology externship experience across the U.S.
- 1.2. The Common Timeline provides an equitable system for submitting applications, conducting interviews, and extending and accepting offers for externships. It provides a process by which academic programs, students and externship sites can make informed decisions about an externship.
- 1.3. Clinical sites are not required to provide externship opportunities but do so as part of a responsibility to the educational foundation of the profession.
- 1.4. The common timeline was developed to standardize this portion of the externship process and was designed to reduce the stress and burden on the students, academic programs and externship sites.
- 1.5. There is the expectation that all participants in the Common Timeline will abide by the guidance specified in this document.

2. General requirements for all parties

- 2.1. All students, academic programs and clinical sites are expected to act in an ethical and professionally responsible manner. This includes the responsibility to honor commitments to the externship timeline and process, offers of an externship and acceptance of those offers.
- 2.2. The ACEN is not a matching program and does not place students in externship sites.

2.2.1. The ACEN does not oversee or conduct services relative to the application, interviews, or decision processes for clinical sites associated with the timeline.

2.2.2. The ACEN assumes no responsibility for students who do not find a placement in an externship site that is part of the network

2.3. The common timeline does not address the starting and ending dates for the externship. Those dates are set by the individual externship sites.

3. Academic programs

3.1. Academic programs have the sole responsibility for determining eligibility of students to participate in an externship and for communicating those requirements to the student.

3.2. Some externship sites may have additional eligibility requirements. It is the responsibility of the academic program to identify and comply with those requirements in the time frame specified by the clinical site.

3.3. Formal communications with the externship sites are the responsibility of the academic programs.

3.3.1. Academic programs are responsible for vetting externship sites to assure the services provided are consistent with the requirements for accreditation and graduation.

3.3.2. Communications regarding legal, educational, assessment, graduation, or other requirements for the externship resides with the academic programs.

3.3.3. The Faculty Externship Coordinator should expect to be copied on interview invitations and externship offers. It is expected that faculty will assist the student with making a timely decision of acceptance or rejection of offers and support the student in communicating their decision to the externship sites as quickly as possible.

4. Students

4.1. Students must be on track to meet the necessary academic requirements for entry into an externship as determined by their academic programs.

- 4.2. Some externship sites may have additional eligibility requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to identify, through their academic programs, and assure compliance with those requirements in the time frame specified by the clinical site.
- 4.3. Students should defer all formal communications with an externship site to their academic programs.
- 4.4. Students have the right to be free of undue pressure or persuasion to make decisions about an externship outside of the timeline.
- 4.5. Within the boundaries and processes established by their academic program, students have the right to (1) freely investigate any externship site, (2) keep confidential any information pertaining to an externship site and communication with an externship site, and (3) keep confidential the details of offers from externship sites.
- 4.6. Students must respond with their intentions to accept or decline an offer of an externship within the designated time frame, or sooner if possible.
- 4.7. Once an offer of an externship has been accepted, the student should inform other sites where an application has been placed of their decision.
- 4.8. Once a student is offered and accepts an externship placement, the student should honor that commitment. In the event of undue hardship (e.g. medical emergency, delayed graduation, etc.) or ineligibility (e.g. failure to meet academic or clinical site requirements) the student should contact the clinical site to determine options for withdrawing or altering the externship. The student should coordinate this communication with their academic program.

5. Clinical Sites

- 5.1. Clinical sites must adhere to the timeline for applications, interview timeframes, extending offers of an externship, and expecting responses from students. Members of the ACEN network should not make offers earlier than the dates noted on the common timeline.

- 5.2. If a clinical site has additional externship requirements, it is the responsibility of that site to communicate those requirements to the students and academic programs prior to making offers.
- 5.3. Clinical sites cannot request students reveal any significant information regarding their applications to other externship sites, or their preferences, or the status of offers from other clinical sites.
- 5.4. Academic programs should be informed of any externship interviews and offers simultaneously with the offer being extended to students.
- 5.5. Sites should inform students who are not under consideration for an externship position at the earliest possible time.
- 5.6. Sites should keep in mind that the externship is $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ of a student's education and the externship happens in partnership with the academic institution. Externship positions should not be filling a staffing need in a practice.