

Assessment of Clinical Competence (ACC-SLP)

McMaster Field Trial, Fall 2019

Background to McMaster Field Trial

In May 2018, the Canadian Alliance of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Regulators (CAASPR) outlined professional competencies required of each clinician upon entry-to-practice in Canada, with the goal of safe and effective practice ([CAASPR, 2018](#)). Using these competencies as the base starting point, the group of Academic Coordinators of Clinical Education from all twelve audiology and speech-language pathology university programs across Canada has been developing a national tool to evaluate student performance on placement. The ACC-SLP will be formally piloted in 2020, pending translation and creation of additional support materials, as well as finalization of the audiology version (ACC-Aud). Given its conceptual similarity to the existing Evaluation of Clinical Competencies in use at McMaster University, we are switching to this trial version of the ACC-SLP in September 2019 as it addresses the problematic aspects of the prior tool.

For those familiar with the prior Evaluation of Clinical Competencies, you will see that the same categories are present in the ACC-SLP and many of the component skills are also present. However, while there used to be 10 overall competency ratings and more than 50 component skill ratings, the new ACC-SLP just has 22 competency ratings. The rating scale is also similar to the one used in the Evaluation of Clinical Competencies

Description of ACC-SLP

Competencies are distributed across seven roles required of a speech-language pathologist or audiologist: Expert (Knowledge and Clinical), Communicator, Collaborator, Advocate, Scholar, Manager, and Professional. Each role contains one or more essential competencies (with most of these further described with several sub-competencies) that the student clinician must demonstrate by the time they complete their studies. In reviewing the descriptions of the competencies, you will notice that words like “effective”, “accurate”, and “appropriate” have been left out. In order to have a document that is succinct, the assumption is that each competency is being performed effectively, accurately, appropriately, etc. and therefore these descriptive words have typically been omitted.

A rating scale accompanies the tool and describes the expected performance of a student at seven points along a continuum that ranges from “Early Novice” to “Entry to Practice”, with “Unsatisfactory” as an option to reflect students with significant difficulties. Over the course of a 2-year Master’s program, students are expected to progress from Early Novice (early stages of first placement) to Entry to Practice (when they finish their final placement).



For the McMaster SLP program, the minimum required achievement levels for each role by the end of each Unit are as follows:

	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Knowledge Expert	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Clinical Expert: Assessment	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Clinical Expert: Intervention	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Communicator	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Collaborator	Unit 2		Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Advocate	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Scholar	Unit 2		Unit 3		Unit 4 and 5
Manager	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	
Professional	Unit 2		Unit 3		Unit 4 and 5

As an example, this means that by the end of Unit 3, a student must achieve the following levels in order to pass the placement:

- Advanced Novice in the Expert, Communicator, Advocate, and Manager roles
- Intermediate in the Collaborator role
- Advanced Intermediate in the Scholar and Professional roles

Students who do not meet the required level on their final evaluation will be presented to the Program for Academic Standing Committee (PASC) for review.

Instructions

Please [click here](#) and scroll down to the Units 2-5 Evaluation section to locate the Assessment of Clinical Competence form and rating scale. *The form can be completed 100% electronically in MS-Word.*

Using the rating scale, you must assign your student a rating for each essential competency. You are instructed to consider the applicable sub-competencies listed below each essential competency in order to help make an overall determination of your student’s rating on the essential competency. Sometimes a

competency will not be applicable for a particular setting or sometimes there may be insufficient opportunity to evaluate a competency. In these circumstances, you should select “Not Applicable” (N/A).

The rating scale is designed to be flexible enough to assess performance on all of the essential competencies. Level descriptors vary along 3 parameters:

- Amount of assistance required
- Amount of time required
- Complexity of clients/situations managed

You may choose how to weigh the relative importance of these 3 parameters in order to best reflect the combination of your clinical setting and the individual competency. Please see the Appendix for some case examples. After assigning a rating for each essential competency within a role, you will provide comments on the student’s strengths and areas for development within that role. If you have general comments relating to the student’s performance, these may be entered on the first page.

This assessment is to be completed at midterm and again at final. The same form is used at final in order to demonstrate progression since midterm.

After meeting to review student performance, both the Clinical Instructor and the student complete the checkbox certification of their signatures. If either the Clinical Instructor or student would like to meet with the Director of Clinical Education, that checkbox should also be checked off. Please also ensure that demographic information and evaluation meeting dates are entered on the first page.

The final completed form should be saved by both the CI and the student, but the student is responsible for submitting to the program (emailed to slpadmin@mcmaster.ca and cc’d to the CI). At midterm, the ACC-SLP is the only evaluation form submitted, but at final, it will be submitted along with the completed Assessment of Self Directed Learning form.

Appendix: Case Examples to Illustrate Rating

Case Example A:

Amie is on her third clinical placement; she is over half way through her Master’s program. She has planned and completed several assessments in the first half of her placement with growing independence. She requires specific cueing (i.e. modeling) to complete new and unfamiliar assessments with complex cases or when there are behaviour difficulties, but performs familiar assessments with only general guidance from her Clinical Educator (CE). She struggles with writing accurate assessment reports. She requires structured templates and examples of written reports from her CE, is unable to explain complex assessment results, and takes extra time to write all reports. Reports usually require 3 revisions before they meet requirements to release to the client.

Amie’s CE completed her midterm assessment with the following ratings for essential competencies 1.2.c (Conducts an assessment) and 2.b (Completes documentation thoroughly and accurately, in a timely manner):

1.2.c Conducts an assessment.

- Organizes the environment for optimal interaction
- Conducts a clinical interview with the client and other relevant individuals
- Administers valid, accurate, and reliable assessment measures and/or procedures (quantitative and/or qualitative) as appropriate
- Demonstrates flexibility and creativity in adapting to unexpected circumstances
- Actively listens to, observes, and documents all components of communication and/or feeding and swallowing
- Manages behaviours within the assessment session

	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.b Completes documentation thoroughly and accurately, in a timely manner.

- Accurately documents, informed consent, services provided, and outcomes
- Ensures reports clearly integrate results, client input, analysis, recommendations, goals, and outcomes, in a manner understandable to the target audience(s)
- Documents in all professional contexts in a clear, concise, organized, and grammatically acceptable manner
- Completes and disseminates documentation in a timely manner
- Complies with regulatory, legislative, and facility requirements related to documentation

	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice

Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Case Example B:

Stefan is finishing his first placement. He has been a pleasure to have on placement. Stefan has demonstrated an excellent work ethic and professional behaviour at all times. He hasn't had an opportunity to manage conflict, but he did observe a significant difference of opinion between a physician and physiotherapist on the team and demonstrated insight into how this could have been better managed in a later discussion with his CE. Stefan's CE had previously completed a large number of assessments and Stefan has been participating in providing a mix of 1:1 and group intervention for adults with acquired brain injuries. His CE had summarized the patterns of strengths and weaknesses for each client and then they worked together to translate the assessment results into goals, approaches, and likely activities. Stefan needed frequent support to select and word short vs long term goals, but he was then able to identify good ideas for how to target the goals in 1:1 sessions. Stefan required assistance to determine how to approach group intervention. He also was unsure of how outcomes might be measured, but once given 1-2 examples, he was usually able to generate 1-2 additional measures.

Stefan's CE completed her final assessment with the following ratings for essential competencies 7.a (Maintains professional demeanour in all clinical interactions and settings) and 1.3.a (Develops a realistic, evidence-informed, and measurable intervention plan):

7.a Maintains professional demeanour in all clinical interactions and settings.

- Maintains confidentiality (e.g., follows consent procedures to share information with other parties).
- Demonstrates professionalism in managing conflict
- Maintains personal and professional boundaries in relationships with clients, colleagues, and other professionals
- Displays a positive, professional image (e.g., follows dress code)
- Demonstrates professionalism in all communications, including those involving electronic platforms
- Demonstrates responsible, reliable behaviour, and accountability for actions and decisions
- Demonstrates respect and appreciation for agencies and educators who provide clinical education opportunities
- Recognizes and responds appropriately to the inherent power differential in the relationship between the client and the student-clinician

	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.3.a Develops a realistic, evidence-informed, and measurable intervention plan.

- Establishes and prioritizes long-term intervention goals that reflect the client’s strengths, needs, values, expectations, and constraints
- Develops specific, measurable, realistic, time-limited, short-term goals to reach the functional long-term intervention goals
- Selects direct and/or indirect service delivery model(s), as appropriate
- Determines the resources and timelines required for the intervention
- Develops activities and outcome measures that align with the client’s goals

	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Case Example C:

Genevieve is at the midterm point of her final placement, providing services to children in a regional children’s treatment centre. While some of the children are straightforward, many have complex physical, cognitive, and emotional needs. Genevieve has been doing well planning the assessment and getting the materials and room ready. She completes clinical interviews with the parents effectively and independently. When assessing the child, she is reasonably comfortable administering and adapting standardized tests, however, she struggles with informal assessment techniques. Although she plans for a range of methods to elicit responses, “in the moment” she needs specific prompts. She has done well managing “regular” behavioural issues in assessment sessions, but she doesn’t implement effective techniques for the more significant behavioural concerns. Except for the informal assessment techniques, she is usually accurate in recording the children’s responses. Genevieve has a strong awareness of her strengths and weaknesses. At the end of each day, she prepares a list of 2-3 skills she wants to focus on improving the next day and her CE has always been in agreement with her choices. Prior to this week’s midterm evaluation, Genevieve independently completed a formal analysis of her difficulties with informal assessment techniques and complex behaviour management along with her plan with next steps to advance her skills in these areas, including a few questions for CE input.

Genevieve’s CE completed her midterm assessment with the following ratings for essential competencies 1.2.c (Conducts an assessment) and 5.a (Maintains currency of professional knowledge and performance in order to provide optimal care):

1.2.c Conducts an assessment.

- Organizes the environment for optimal interaction
- Conducts a clinical interview with the client and other relevant individuals
- Administers valid, accurate, and reliable assessment measures and/or procedures (quantitative and/or qualitative) as appropriate
- Demonstrates flexibility and creativity in adapting to unexpected circumstances
- Actively listens to, observes, and documents all components of communication and/or feeding and swallowing

- Manages behaviours within the assessment session

	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.a Maintains currency of professional knowledge and performance in order to provide optimal care.

- Identifies own professional strengths and areas for development
- Determines own goals for competency development
- Develops a plan and implements strategies for continued development in all seven competency roles

	Unsatisfactory	Early Novice	Novice	Advanced Novice	Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Entry to Practice
Midterm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Final	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>