What is an externship? When, where, and how do I apply?

A resource to help answer questions and provide doctoral students in audiology with recommendations on how to navigate the final year externship process.
Acknowledgements

The 2020–2021 SAA Education Committee gratefully acknowledges all of the mentors, professors, and colleagues who have set forth the foundation for the content presented in this guide. Specifically, we recognize the contributions of the following people to this document:

Brandon J. Roppel, BA
Northwestern University

Sarah Pupa, AuD
University of Pittsburgh

Sam Sekator, AuD
Vanderbilt University

Amy Stahl, AuD
Vanderbilt University

Amy Hartman, AuD
SAA Education Committee Advisor
University of Wisconsin Madison
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1. Introduction

Congratulations! You are one step closer to completing your clinical doctorate in audiology. After having completed the majority of the academic coursework and clinical placements required through your university program, you have acquired a vast range of knowledge and skills which are essential to practicing as a licensed audiologist. The next step before obtaining your degree is to begin the search and application process for your final year externship. We hope that this guide provides you with an understanding of the externship process, information on navigating, searching, and applying for externship positions, and tips to make your experience as successful as possible.

What is an externship in the profession of audiology?

"Exterionships are long-term clinical training experiences that occur outside of the university. Students usually will have completed most, if not all, of their academic curriculum; however, they are still enrolled as students at the university. Accordingly, the university is still responsible for the student and should have an ongoing relationship with both the student and preceptor throughout the course of the externship in order to monitor student progress and intervene if problems arise."


The externship marks the final year of supervised clinical experience for a doctoral student in audiology. In the externship year, AuD students integrate their working knowledge of all facets of the profession to provide audiological services rooted in evidence-based practice. This final year of clinical experience allows externs to diversify their knowledge, develop and strengthen their clinical skills, and work towards greater autonomy as clinicians.

However, the externship application process can be overwhelming for an AuD student. The process is similar to applying for a job. Additionally, every university program facilitates the externship process differently. Nearly all externship sites vary in the materials they require for their applications and their deadlines for submissions. Given all of these variables, the process of finding and applying to externships can be daunting but know that you are not alone. We have confidence that you will rise to the challenge! In addition to this packet, we encourage you to seek guidance from your peers, classmates, and additional resources through national SAA.
2. Timeline

In April 2021, the Student Academy of Audiology (SAA) Education Committee surveyed 166 AuD students regarding the externship application timeline. A summary of the results are shown below. We hope this information provides an overview of when students should start preparing and applying for externships, interviewing, and accepting offers.

In which month did you start preparing for externships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining Months</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In which month(s) did you apply for externships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>9 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>4 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>30 (18.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>57 (34.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>122 (73.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>124 (74.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>28 (15.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>81 (48.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>11 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In which month(s) did you interview for externships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>9 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>5 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>3 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>12 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>43 (25.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>113 (66.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>111 (66.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>50 (30.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>11 (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In which month(s) did you receive offer(s) for externships?

166 responses

- January: 9 (5.4%)
- February: -3 (1.8%)
- March: -2 (1.2%)
- April: 1 (0.6%)
- May: 0 (0.2%)
- June: -1 (0.6%)
- July: -3 (1.8%)
- August: -10 (6%)
- September: 50 (30.1%)
- October: -81 (48.8%)
- November: -45 (27.1%)
- December: -14 (8.4%)

In which month did you accept an offer for an externship?

166 responses

- September: 13.9%
- October: 44.0%
- December: 5.4%
- November: 25.3%
- Remaining Months: 11.4%

How many externships did you apply to?

166 responses

- Fewer than 5: 27.1%
- 5 to 10: 59.6%
- More than 10: 13.3%
Summary of survey results:

The majority (72.3%) of students surveyed began preparing for the externship search (i.e., learning about the process, developing resume/CV) between April and July the year before their externship started. Almost three-fourths (73.5–74.7%) of students applied to sites during August and September. Over two-thirds (66.9–68.1%) reported having an interview during September and October. The majority (59.6%) of students submitted between five-ten applications throughout the externship search. Finally, respondents reported the highest volume of acceptances (83.2%) during the months of September, October, and November. Keep in mind that the externship process is expansive throughout the entire year and is ever-changing. We hope that you can use this data to prepare yourself as you embark upon this exciting journey to your final year!

What can I do to prepare?

Before you start sorting through externship listings, think about what factors are most important to you in an externship. Here are some considerations as you determine what kind of externship you want, in no specific order.

- Populations served
- Clinical experiences
- Location(s)
- Finances
- Research opportunities

Once you’ve identified the key components that you are looking for in an externship, you can narrow your search to prioritize those factors.

Where do I look for externship listings?

- HEARCareers
- Your program - talk to your externship coordinator or program director
- Suggestions from peers or professors
- General internet search
- Facebook groups (e.g., Audiology 4th Year Externships, note that additional groups may have been added since the creation of this document)

However you conduct your search, develop a strategy to stay organized throughout the process. You may want to create a spreadsheet or keep a notebook of all the sites you are interested in. Write down each site’s application deadline and required materials so you can plan out your time accordingly.
3. Resumes

Keeping your resume updated is one of the important ways to prepare yourself for the externship process. You’ll discover externship sites have different deadlines for applications, so having your resume ready to send will allow you to apply to those early application deadlines. Consider the following as you develop and strengthen your resume:

**DOs**
- Ideally, one page in length (two pages max.)
- Use a legible font size and style (e.g., Arial, Calibri, Garamond, Times)
- Bullet key points and clinical skills
- Find a template you like and add your own experiences
- Have other people read your resume (friends, family, colleagues)
- Emphasize experiences most applicable to the site that you are applying to
- Customize your resume for each site

**DON’Ts**
- Provide lengthy descriptions of activities, experiences, and research
- Detail work experience unrelated to audiology or the externship site
- Include outdated or irrelevant experiences (e.g., high school extracurriculars)
- List out your graduate coursework
- Have any grammatical errors or typos - proofread multiple times!

The following pages consist of some sample resumes to provide you with an idea of formatting. Keep in mind that not everyone’s resume is formatted in the same way, but the most important point to focus on is presenting your information as clearly and concisely as possible. Externship sites review numerous applications, so you want to ensure that you are using their time efficiently by succinctly highlighting your skills and experiences. For additional support, check with your university career services about resume workshops. Also, try reaching out to your program director or professors for suggestions on how to draft your resume.

The Academy offers a free review service for resumes, cover letters, and thank you notes specifically for SAA members, and we highly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity! They typically review documents within 14 days, so remember to set aside time when using this membership service. Visit the Academy website for more information about the Academy’s resume review service.
Name

Phone: xxx.xxx.xxx| xxx@gmail.com| City, State| Linkedin.com/in/name

**EDUCATION**

XXX University | City, State  
*Graduate Degree*

XXX University | City, State  
*Undergraduate Degree*

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

**Name of Clinical Site/Rotation(s)**

**Clinical Skills**

- Comprehensive Adult Audiologic Evaluation
  - Case History
  - Otoscopy
  - Pure Tone Audiometry
  - Speech Testing
  - Impittance Testing
- Hearing Aid Selection and Fitting
- Hearing Device Troubleshooting
- Real-Ear Verification
- Earmold Impressions
- Counseling and Case Management
- Report Writing
- Assisted with Visual Reinforcement and Conditioned Play Audiometry
- Performed comprehensive Central Auditory Processing Disorder evaluations

**Aural Rehabilitation**

- Educated participants about the auditory system, hearing devices, and communication strategies

**Developmental Diagnostic Program**

- Participated in a multidisciplinary evaluation involving various types of hearing, speech, and language screening measures for children 0-3 years of age

**LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

National Student Academy of Audiology  
*Education Committee Member*

- Explored current student needs surrounding audiology education and the externship process
- Developed programming and materials to improve public awareness of audiology during National Audiology Awareness Month and the “Ask Me About Audiology” Campaign

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

XXX University  
*Capstone/Study Title*

Mentors: xxx

- Investigated [research question]
- Collected data, analyzed results, and produced [outcome of research project]

**PUBLICATIONS**

EDUCATION

Doctor of Audiology | XXX University | City, State
§ Anticipated Graduation: XXX

Bachelor of Science | XXX | City, State
§ Graduated Summa Cum Laude: May XXX
§ Major: Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences
§ Minor(s): XXX

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

XXX Children’s Hospital, City, State
Spring XXXX
☒ Performed comprehensive audiologic evaluations on children prior to otolaryngology appointments. Physiologic methods included tympanometry, acoustic reflexes, and distortion product otoacoustic emissions. Audiometry was performed using behavioral techniques including: visual reinforcement audiometry, conditioned play audiometry, and conventional audiometry.
☒ Completed sedated and unsedated auditory brainstem response (ABR) testing and newborn ABR screenings
☒ Documented risk factors for hearing loss in neonates and referred for hearing monitoring as appropriate
☒ Completed clinical reports following appointments
☒ Utilized phone and video interpreter services to communicate to patients and their families

XXX Clinic, City, State
Spring XXXX
☒ Executed behavioral hearing evaluations and physiologic measures including tympanometry, acoustic reflexes and distortion product otoacoustic emissions, and report writing in 30-minute appointment time slots for adults and children prior to otolaryngology clinic visits
☒ Provided comprehensive adult hearing aid services including: hearing aid consultations, earmold impressions, hearing aid fittings using real ear measurements, and follow-up visits
☒ Performed full vestibular assessments including ocular motility, rotary chair, positional/positioning, caloric testing, video head impulse testing (vHIT), cervical and ocular vestibular evoked myogenic potentials, electrocochleography, computerized dynamic posturography, and ABR testing

Veterans Affairs Medical Center, City, State
Fall XXXX
☒ Completed comprehensive audiologic evaluations, hearing aid selections, earmold impressions, hearing aid fittings, and follow-up appointments in strict accordance with VA-specific protocol

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant | XXXX Lab | XXXX University
Date-Present
Project Directors: XXXX, XXXX, XXXX
☒ Manage data entry and review data stored in online databases
☒ Submit amendments and continuing reviews to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Capstone | XXXX Laboratory | XXXX University
Date-Date
Project Director: XXXX  Committee: XXXX, XXXX
☒ Developed a pilot study to XXXX

WORK EXPERIENCE

Hearing Aid and Cochlear Implant Student Worker | XXXX University
XXXX-Present
☒ Pre-fit all incoming hearing aids by ensuring electroacoustic test box data met current ANSI standards and prescriptive methods using the Verifit
☒ Enhanced customer experience in the hearing aid walk-in clinic by providing troubleshooting, cleaning hearing aids, and managing repairs
POSTERS/PRESENTATIONS

- Last Name, First Initial. Title. Poster presented at: XXXX; Date; City, State
- Name. Title. Slides presented at: XXXX; Date; City, State.

HONORS/AWARDS

- AAA XXXX Conference Poster award for XXXX
- XXX Scholarship (Date)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Student Academy of Audiology (SAA)
- National SAA XXXX Committee Member
- XXXX University Chapter: Position Title

National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- Walk for Hearing (Date)
- Special Olympics Healthy Hearing (Date)
4. Cover Letters

Many externship sites require a cover letter or letter of intent in their application. The cover letter’s purpose is to detail why you are interested in that particular externship site and expand upon the qualities that make you a strong candidate. Remember, keeping your sentences brief and straightforward will enhance the clarity of your writing. Here are some suggestions on how to construct your cover letter:

1. Research the Addressee

Do your research to ensure that you have the correct contact information and address for your cover letter. Most importantly, make sure that you address your reader with the proper credentials and avoid using “sir/madam”. Some sites have intermediary staff members collect or review applications before being sent to the audiologist. Also, not every audiologist has their AuD. It is crucial that you accurately address who you are talking to in order to convey the respect and attention that the recipient deserves.

2. Introduce Yourself

The cover letter provides you with an opportunity to convey your personality, showcase your qualifications, and explain your interest in the externship position. Start by introducing the basics: your name, what university program you attend, and your expected graduation date. Then, talk about why you are interested in that particular externship site. Are you interested in this type of work setting? Do they provide a wide range of clinical experiences? Do they provide experiences in any specialty areas in audiology? Finally, make a statement regarding why you are qualified for the position. Think of this as your thesis statement. Once you’ve set the stage, the rest of the letter provides support for why you are a strong candidate.

3. Expand Upon Your Qualifications

Now that you’ve introduced yourself, it’s time to provide concrete examples of why you’re the best fit for the position. Do you have a determined mindset? Are you highly organized? Do you have extensive experience in a particular field? Are you a skillful researcher? When writing your cover letter, you should avoid repeating information from your resume. Instead, the experiences or information you provide in the cover letter should be an extension of your resume. Think of your cover letter as a supplement to your resume. If you were unable to squeeze in something on your resume, here is your opportunity to include that information. Whatever you choose to write about, try to relate how those skills or experiences can contribute to the externship site.
4. Provide Your Contact Information

Make it easy for the externship site to contact you. Yes, your resume has your contact information, but so should your cover letter. You can use the same page header on both your resume and cover letter or include this information in your concluding paragraph. Once you’ve summarized the main points presented in your cover letter, provide the best means for them to contact you so that you can further discuss the externship opportunity.

5. Thank the Reader

Remember that most externship sites are not being paid to precept students for a year, let alone have time allotted in their schedules to review applications. Exhibit your professionalism and sincere gratitude by thanking the reader for their time. This simple gesture will not go unnoticed.
Month Day, Year

Addressee Name, Credentials
Externship Site Name
Address

Dear XXX,

I am writing to express my interest in the externship position at your exceptional facility. I am a graduate student in audiology at XXX University in City, State who is very passionate about working with cochlear implant patients, being part of a multidisciplinary team, and advocating for our profession. As demonstrated by my leadership and clinical experiences, I have developed a diverse set of transferable skills and a determined mindset that I believe would make a valuable asset to your audiology department at Externship Site Name.

Throughout the past few years, I have diligently worked and balanced my graduate education while serving on a variety of student and professional organizational boards. These opportunities have challenged my ability to think critically and enhanced how I relay my thoughts to others in both a respectful and concise way. My experiences in these positions have also deepened my passion for the field of audiology and have equipped me with the tools to be forward thinking in the comprehensive care of our patients. With these skills, I feel confident in my ability to collaborate with colleagues, counsel patients, and be a voice for change in our profession.

Additionally, I have taken a strong initiative towards the development of my clinical skills. My background in working with adults showcases my ability to manage an entire case and facilitate efforts to enhance a patient’s everyday communication through amplification and aural rehabilitation. Although I have not yet had a placement focused on serving the pediatric population, I have had the experience of working with children in a variety of settings. Last summer, I worked as a lead counselor for a ten-week speech therapy program and was responsible for planning play-based activities to develop social skills amongst children with a range of developmental disabilities. This experience has helped me learn how to engage with a diverse group of children, gauge their social and language abilities, and keep them interested in activities throughout an extended period of time. As a result, this experience has prepared me as I continue to develop my competency in performing diagnostic and rehabilitative services for children.

I am drawn to work under your supervision at Externship Site Name given the opportunity to provide a wide range of services in a dynamic and fast-paced setting. My inspiration to pursue audiology is deeply rooted in serving the cochlear implant population, which is why I am specifically interested in the variety of implantable device services that are provided by your audiology department. Moreover, I am eager to gain experience in electrophysiology testing and am very impressed by the extent of services provided by your practice. With this in mind, I am driven to pursue a diverse and challenging externship at your facility that provides comprehensive care across all patient populations.

As demonstrated by my leadership and educational experiences, I believe that I possess the skills and dedication that would positively contribute to your audiology department at Externship Site Name. I am eager to discuss this position further and expand upon my qualifications for your externship opportunity. Please feel free to contact me at xxx.xxx.xxx or xxx@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and commitment to advancing the education of future audiologists. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Name
5. Interview Tips

Being extended an interview is a huge accomplishment and we want to ensure that you have all of the tools necessary to impress your interviewers. Here are some quick tips on how to prepare for your interview.

1. Do Your Research

Conduct research on the facility and the people interviewing you. Take note of any similar clinical interests or experiences you share with your interviewers so you can make a point to discuss those during the interview. Focus on asking bigger picture questions (e.g., what clinical opportunities do you offer?) and reserve smaller, less important questions (e.g., stipends, vacation days) for either current externs or after an offer is extended. Some sites may offer you the opportunity to visit their clinic; if you are able, go for it! This will give you an idea of what that clinic is all about and how they operate.

2. Practice, Practice, Practice

Practice answering possible questions before the interview. Write down your responses and rehearse them aloud. A good technique is to use the STAR method: Situation (describe the situation), Task (explain the task you needed to complete), Action (describe the specific actions you took to complete the task), Result (close with the result of your actions). After preparing your questions, schedule a mock interview with a friend, family member, or through career services at your university. Try to schedule the mock interview with someone who doesn’t know you personally. You know audiology, so prepare for soft-skill related questions and convey your answers concisely. Also, practice smiling! Even when you are on a phone call, oftentimes interviewers can tell if you’re smiling.

3. Be Prepared

If you have a virtual interview, set up your computer at least 10-15 minutes early. Ensure that your internet connection is stable, your webcam is in a good position, and the audio is working properly. Face a window if you can to allow natural lighting to highlight your face. Ensure the space around you isn’t cluttered. During the interview, make eye contact with the camera instead of looking at yourself on the screen. Free your space from distractions and have a notebook ready to jot information down. It’s a great idea to have your phone on hand (on silent, of course!) in case you have connectivity problems. You can use your phone as a personal hotspot for a stable connection or ask to continue your interview on the phone. Be prepared, as technology issues may arise.
If you have an interview in person, make sure to arrive a few minutes early. This may be the first time you will be going to the facility; account for traffic, finding the site, and navigating parking. Bring extra copies of your resume for the interviewers, along with one for yourself. They will likely have your application information, but bringing your own copies will highlight your professionalism. Additionally, bring a notebook so that you can jot down important details about the externship. If you choose to do so, ask the interviewer if it’s okay to take notes and be conscious of how often you look down at your notebook. Being mindful of your body language is really important during an interview, especially maintaining good eye contact. We know that nonverbal communication conveys a lot of information, so make sure that you are cognizant of your facial expressions, body movements, and posture. Above all, take a deep breath and relax right before the interview starts in order to get in the right headspace to answer questions.

4. Keep it Professional

An interview is not the time to stand out with your dress or makeup! Stay neutral and polished. Recommended attire includes black or gray suits, solid-colored shirts, sensible and comfortable shoes, minimal jewelry, and hair pulled off of your face. Even if you have a virtual interview, dressing professionally will put you in the right mindset.

5. Be Confident in Yourself

Execute the interviews with the confidence of someone who already has the job! Go into it with the mindset that you are the best person for the position, because you are, and don’t be afraid to tell them. Prepare examples that demonstrate how you are the most qualified candidate. Confidence is essential, but also make sure to be yourself. Ultimately, you want to accept an externship where you fit in. Even though it is important that the site offers the clinical experiences that you want, it is just as important that the supervising audiologists have personalities that resonate with you. Remember, they’re interviewing you, but you’re also interviewing them.

6. Send a Thank You

Remember to formally thank your interviewers by sending a short email or even a ‘thank you’ card. This gesture speaks highly of your professionalism and emphasizes your gratitude for the time they dedicated to you. Most externship preceptors are not paid to take on a student, so it’s important to acknowledge that you value their time. Keep the ‘thank you’ simple and concise!
6. Practice Questions

As previously mentioned, preparing and rehearsing your answers to practice questions will help to not only strengthen your ability to communicate with your interviewers, but also boost your confidence. Below are practice questions that SAA members have accumulated over the years. For additional preparation, we encourage you to ask your peers and professors for more questions.

**General:**

- What do you consider to be your strengths in audiology? Your weaknesses?
- What qualities did your best supervisors have?
- What is your favorite part of audiology? Your least favorite?
- Why do you want to be an audiologist?
- Tell us about your capstone project.
- How do you adapt to a fast paced environment?
- Discuss the work you have done in XXX’s lab (listed on resume).
- What do you like to do in your free time/hobbies?
- Are you comfortable working with multiple different clinicians and different teaching styles?
- How do you feel about working with other professionals, specifically an ENT?
- How do you handle stressful situations?
- How do you handle feedback and how do you respond to it? What style of feedback do you respond best to?
- What was the hardest class for you and why?
- How would your peers describe you?
- Tell me about your favorite and least favorite clinical placements.
- What courses interested you the most?
- What area of audiology do you plan to specialize in?
- Where do you see yourself in five years (geographical and type of practice)?
- What’s your dream job?
- Do you work better alone or with a team?
- What area of audiology do you have the least experience with?

**Site-specific:**

- What made you apply here for an externship placement?
- What makes you a good candidate/good fit for this placement?
- What do you hope to get out of your externship?
- Would you ever consider working here following your externship? Explain why we should hire you.
- Why are you interested in working here?
Situational:

- What would you do if a patient arrives late at the end of the day?
- How would you change your balance protocol if a patient had a conductive problem?
- How would you modify testing for a patient with dementia?
- What has been your most difficult case?
- What has been your most interesting case (or most memorable)?
- What would you do if a supervisor does something differently than you were taught?
- Tell us about a time when you went above and beyond what was necessary for a patient.
- Tell us about a challenging patient you had and how you handled it.
- Give us an example of when you made a mistake. How did you fix it?
- Are you comfortable with counseling? Describe a specific situation.
- Give an example of a time you have been criticized at work by a supervisor. How did you react?
- Describe a time where you may not have made the best decision and what you did to fix that?
- Tell us about a time when you received constructive criticism. Were you able to adjust your actions accordingly? How?
- Have you ever faced an ethical dilemma in a clinic, and if so, how did you handle it?
- What is your opinion on over-the-counter hearing aids?
- Describe a time you worked effectively and ineffectively.
- What has been your most rewarding moment in audiology so far?

Competency-based:

- Which hearing aid (and/or cochlear implant) companies are you most familiar with?
- What is the protocol for an ABR?
- What muscle is responsible for the acoustic reflex and what cranial nerve innervates it?
- If you have someone with a conductive hearing loss but normal tymps and reflexes, what might you suspect?
- What is the importance of RECDs on a pediatric patient and what would you do if you were unable to obtain RECDs on a pediatric patient?
- Who are other professionals that we typically refer to?
- Walk us through an initial appointment/rescreen of a failed hearing test at PCP.
- Walk us through a hearing aid fitting.
- What equipment are you familiar with?
- How would you differentiate between SSCD and otosclerosis (e.g., audiogram, VEMP results)?
- Clinically, what do you have the most experience in? What do you need more experience in?
Questions to ask interviewers:

It is important to ask the interviewers questions. Asking questions demonstrates that you took the time to do your research and are interested in the position. It also provides you with the opportunity to gather more information about the site to ensure if it is the right fit for you.

Example questions to ask:

- What does a daily/weekly schedule look like at your clinic?
- Do you do real ear measurements?
- What is your typical patient population?
- What is the interaction like between ENT and audiology?
- What will extern responsibilities include?
- How much supervision should I expect to receive?
- What does interprofessional collaboration look like for an extern at your site?
- What are the strengths and areas of improvement of your clinic?
- How do you provide feedback? How often?
- Does your clinic offer the chance to observe or participate in intraoperative monitoring?
- Are there research opportunities available?
- How long are your appointments (e.g., hearing evaluation, hearing aid fitting, hearing aid evaluation) scheduled for?
- What are your expectations for the extern?
- What will your ideal candidate achieve within the first 30 days? Three months?
- Who will be the direct supervisor?
- Will I be able to attend any continuing education events?
- What is the timeline and process for the final decisions about the position?
7. Making a Final Decision

After months of preparation, you have an externship offer! First, take a step back and celebrate this significant milestone. You’ve worked hard, and this externship offer serves as a symbol of your accomplishments thus far. You also may receive multiple offers for externships and feel torn making your final decision. Make sure to follow up with your university’s externship coordinator or program director; they are there to help and support you throughout the process. Before making your final decision, here are some questions to reflect on.

1. Why did I initially apply to this site?

Think back to what first drew you to apply for this externship. You’ve likely obtained a deeper understanding of what the site has to offer and have become acquainted with the audiologists. After completing the application and interview processes, the externship may differ from what you had initially expected. Ask yourself: Does this externship feel like the right fit for me? Will I be comfortable working in this type of setting, living in this state, and working with these professionals for an entire year?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this site?

As you reflect on why you first applied to this externship, make sure to review the essential components you want or need in your final year. Weigh the pros and cons of this externship site over other sites you applied to. You may not get everything you want in an externship, so ensure that you will get the most critical factors. Above all, know that your externship is not going to define your entire audiology career. You can and will still seize additional opportunities as a working professional.

3. Am I waiting on other offers from other sites?

Because the timeline for applications varies per site, you may need to accept or decline an offer knowing that another offer may come your way. This timeline can be particularly stressful if you only have a few days to make your final decision. Don’t hesitate to reach out to the other site and inquire about the status of their decision regarding your application, that you have another offer on the table, and need to make a decision by X date. Have confidence in yourself when deciding because only you can determine whether the site is the right choice for you.
4. What do I do when accepting an offer?

- Follow your university program’s recommendations—many programs require you to confer with your program director or externship coordinator prior to accepting an offer.
- Respond to the site with gratitude and excitement for your future experience!
- Ask the site if there are any tasks or paperwork you should begin completing before starting your externship.
- Withdraw your application from any additional sites you have applied to so that those professionals can save time reviewing applications.

5. What do I do when declining an offer?

- Follow your university program’s recommendations—many programs require you to confer with your program director or externship coordinator before declining an offer.
- Respond with gratitude and professionalism.
- Thank the individual for their time spent interviewing you. You do not need to give them a reason why you’re declining.
8. Final Thoughts

Congratulations! You have accepted your externship position and are probably wondering what happens next. Depending on when you’ve accepted an offer, it may be months until you begin your placement. It is typical not to have any additional communication with your externship site until much closer to your start date. Make sure you’ve discussed your official start date with your site, and don’t hesitate to reach out with questions while waiting for your externship to start. Finally, consider asking your externship preceptor if they can share the current externs’ contact information. The current extern will have a lot of information to share with you about the site, insider tips, apartment/house recommendations, etc.

In the meantime, start studying for the praxis. As discussed in The SAA Blog, the Praxis® is the audiology licensure exam proctored through the Educational Testing Service (ETS®). The most recent version of the exam launched in 2020, so now there are two versions available: Praxis® Audiology I (5342) and Praxis® Audiology II (5343). Although it is recommended that you complete the latest version, check with your state’s licensing agency to determine which exam you need to satisfy licensure requirements. The formatting for both exams is the same and consists of five different content categories: foundations of audiology, prevention and screening, assessment, intervention, professional and ethical responsibilities. Here are some steps you can take to prepare yourself to take the Praxis® exam.

**Step 1: Familiarize Yourself with the Exam**
- Review the five content areas.
- What are your areas of strength?
- Identify your areas of improvement to focus your studies. Check out these study tips from ETS® on how to be a better test-taker.

**Step 2: Dedicate Time in Your Schedule to Study**
- Develop a study group with your cohort.
- Set a goal for when to take the exam to keep you motivated.
- Organize your schedule and set time aside to study.
- Remember, studying for the Praxis® will also benefit you in preparing for externship interviews!
Step 3: Put Your Knowledge to the Test
- Utilize practice questions through ETS®: Praxis® I & Praxis® II.
- If interested, an interactive practice test is also available for purchase through ETS.

Step 4: Getting Ready for Test Day
- Set aside your registration and ID the night before the test.
- Get a good night’s sleep and eat a healthy breakfast.
- Put yourself in the right mindset.
- Be confident. You’ve got this!

References

https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/tips/
