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Preparing for Success: Navigating the Externship Application Experience

**Presenters: Meredith Braza, AuD, Erin Miller, AuD, Charlotte Mullen, AuD,
Catherine Palmer, PhD, Kaylee Smith, AuD**

Great. Welcome, everybody. I'm Katherine Palmer. It's very nice to be talking with you. I'm coming from the University of Pittsburgh today with a panel, and we're going to talk about preparing for success, navigating the externship application experience.

This is hopefully good information for everybody who's involved in the extern experience. And you'll see that we really highlight three groups of stakeholders, but this specifically is really aimed at our students today, thinking a lot about how you navigate this experience. Our presenters today are Charlotte Mullen, who's from Boston Children's Hospital and is someone who is an educator. And they take externship students in that site. Meredith Braza, who we call our recent graduate.

She's a couple years out now and working at Boston Children's Hospital, and so she still has the student perspective, having had that lived experience fairly recently. We have Erin Miller with us from the University of Akron, who is very involved in the externship experience in her program. She directs the AUD program as her part of that socio program. And she really is the one who sits down and thinks through this with the students, gets them placed, monitors them, works with their externship coordinators who are on site, and Kaylee Smith, who's at Henry Ford Hospital. Kaylee educates externs in their site, and they take a number of externs at the Henry Ford Hospital.

And as I said myself, I'm at the University of Pittsburgh, and I have the pleasure of wearing both hats in this activity. So we place Pitt students, obviously, all over the country in externships. And we also at UPMC have four externs in our adult clinics and two in our pediatric clinics. So experience on both sides of this issue.

In terms of disclosures, you can see this if you download the slides, but pretty much we're all employed, as I just mentioned. And a few of us have the good luck to work with some publishers and consult in some areas related to the content that we know about. And several of us here sit on what's called the ACN Steering committee, and we'll be talking about ACN during the talk today. So a few of us have

been pretty involved as that group has developed learning outcomes. Hopefully after this course, you will be able to describe the steps of the application process for the final year externship.

So we'll be talking through at least components that we think are really important that you think about, discuss the factors to be considered when deciding where to apply. And we really have great people on the panel who thought a lot about this, helping guide students and identify resource supports that are available during the application process. And we'll lean into this a little bit because part of our passion as a group has been to see if we can make this process more supportive for all the entities that get involved. I want to thank the group for being here today, but I want to thank the larger group who we all work with, which is a huge group of clinical placements that work with externs who've really motivated a lot of this work. And we'll talk a little bit about that later.

So I am going to pass it over to Charlotte.

Great. Thank you, Katherine. So this has really all started our conversation as a group over some shared frustrations that we've all encountered. And the frustrations really come from what perspective you're looking at the externship process. It's going to be certainly different for students that are in the application and interview process.

It's different for the clinics who are accepting and interviewing students. It's different for a large hospital clinic than it is for perhaps a smaller practice, whether it's an ENT office or a private practice. And universities have many students in their cohorts that they have to navigate through the process, making sure that everybody's meeting application, submitting all of the appropriate paperwork and all of the materials that are needed for a successful application.

So some of the pain points that really started this conversation a number of years ago came from all of these different groups. So students were saying that the application process can be very stressful. And

although we want to alleviate the pressure as much as we can, there are still some stressors that are going to be associated with it. But students are having to take classes, do their clinical placements, make sure that they're getting all of their application materials submitted in a timely manner, making sure that the faculty and preceptors that they've asked for recommendations are submitting their materials. But yet, what happens if I don't get an externship?

I think everyone can rest assured that you will land something. But on the clinical end, we were finding that we would post our information about our externships and you'd go on, and several clinics had already posted ahead of you. And the application deadlines were getting earlier and earlier and earlier and earlier. And students were also saying that from the academic side, many times they were being advised to take the first offer that they were given simply because there was no insurance that they would get an additional offer and better to have an externship landed rather than holding off and not getting anything. So, as Kathryn mentioned, a number of us came together to form the audiology clinical education network, and it's really a voluntary, collaborative effort from a lot of us to hopefully improve on the audiology externship process.

So not only the application process, but the actual education that all of the students are getting. So really we are student focused. There are lots of things about the whole process and our conversations that are not of benefit necessarily to the clinics, but we want to make sure that the students are getting the best possible possible education in that final year. So the different constituent groups, as I've alluded to, are certainly the students who are seeking that final year externship, the clinics that are offering the externships, and the clinical education, along with the academic programs who are in a position to need to place their students in meaningful externships, not just someplace where, oh, well, I'll get a lot of experience, but where you're actually learning and becoming a competent clinician.

It's long been known that we need some standardization within the field of audiology. There are certainly many academic programs, there's even more clinical sites that are accepting students for that final year experience, but it's always, prior to this, been kind of haphazard. There were different deadlines, different logistics, different requirements for the applications, and it was very, very challenging. And ASHA, as long ago as 2019, identified that we needed to somehow come up with a uniform process to really look at how we're educating the students in that final year. So in that thought, the audiology clinical education network came together.

So this is just sort of a timeline of how the ACEN has progressed. So it was early in 2020 that doctor Ian Windmill, who was at the time at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, excuse me, had reached out to a number of colleagues to raise this question of how can we look at the final year externship and what can we perhaps do about it as a profession. So we started meeting and talking about some of all of those pain points that I mentioned earlier on, and the application process was certainly the topic that rose to the top of the list. So we talked about it and came up with a timeline that we proposed for when students would submit their applications with an application deadline, when clinics could do their interviews and send out offers to the candidates that they would like to have in their clinic. So we did it our first time in the fall of 2021.

It went reasonably well, but as you know, any project, we found in collecting some feedback from everyone that there were some issues. So we made some revisions, tried it again with those revisions in the fall of 2022, and again in the fall of 2023, and with all of the input from the member clinics, we have now planned for both this upcoming application season as well as 2025.

So really the, you know, the mindset for the externship is, and this is the important part, particularly for the students, it is a continued learning experience. It's not your first job, although you may get paid or you may get a stipend, but it is an educational experience where it's hoped that you are getting good

audiology, clinical practices, using evidence based approach, using all of the things that we know from research as being good clinical care for our patients, and ultimately that you're achieving a clinical proficiency, that at the end of that externship year, you're ready to go out and be an independent practitioner.

The reality of the final year externship is for students in a four year program. That final year externship constitutes 25% of your education. If you're in a three year program, it's a third of your education happens in that final year. And so we recognize that it has to be a three way collaboration, not only with the students seeking and getting an externship that meets their professional goals, but also working with the university programs and the clinics to ensure that we're educating the students in a way that they should. As I mentioned before, it is an educational experience and a student shouldn't be going into an externship and viewed as just an inexpensive employee who can be plugged into doing some basic things without any teaching, mentorship and education.

And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Meredith. Great. So as a somewhat recent extern, I just want to share a sampling of what students had to say about this process. You know, students were experiencing stress applying for externships, particularly as they were managing multiple timelines and separate applications for each site placement. And Charlotte certainly alluded to some of these pain points based on student report and student data.

Overall, students preferred a standardized application process, an effort to reduce uncertainty, pressure, and really workload associated with multiple separate timelines. Students were spending significant amounts of time coordinating deadlines for themselves and their letter of recommendation writers, you know, using separate sites to locate and apply for externship opportunities, filling out multiple similar, but different application forms per externship site. And this really created a lot of stress and pressure. On top of clinical and academic commitments, students often felt as though they were

unaware of all the sites available to them, and that created additional strain. So, as such, this centralized application process provides students with exposure to more sites, some of which they may not have known about or considered previously.

But we really want to emphasize that a critical component of this more standardized application process is a clear timeline, including not only application deadlines, but also dates on which sites will release offers and dates by which students need to let sites know of their decision. So this way, students have assured time to plan to consider their options, knowing exactly when applications are due, sort of when they'll receive the offer, and then by when they need to inform sites of their decisions. And this allows students a predictable amount of time to consider all aspects of this big decision in their education, financial components, geographic, clinical, educational, et cetera. There are a lot of factors to keep in mind when making this decision. Sites are also able to post clear information about the aspects of their externship, which really allows for students to make direct comparisons between sites.

And we like to say, having clear guidance on when students need to make a decision also allows for more collaboration between the student and the academic program, particularly in assuring the best fit for an externship. Charlotte also mentioned, you know, in the past, without a clear amount of time to make a decision, we have seen academic programs sometimes even pressuring students to accept the first offer they were given in light of uncertainty about other offers coming through. You know, I remember turning down some scheduled interviews about sites I was excited about for an offer I believed was best for me, but I couldn't know for sure at the time because I hadn't yet spoken with those other sites. With a standardized, clear, clear cut timeline, students in academic programs can talk through decisions without feeling the pressure of time or uncertainty. And this allows for some clear communication between student and academic program as well as with the clinical sites should questions arise in the consideration process.

And that being said, institutional assistance really support of the student comes forth as a key component in the student finding the best fit for an externship following that first cycle. This process also provides avenues for additional applications should students to expand their pool of options. Again, given a predictable timeline, students can discuss the opportunity to submit additional applications with their academic programs so they don't feel so alone in this process for some further reading several student surveys have been published in audiology today on the student perspective on this process. Those are included below on this slide should you be interested. But now I will pass the mic on to Kaylee who will talk about the clinic site perspective regarding this process.

Thank you, Meredith. So, as we've been discussing before, the ACN there really wasn't a standardized process for when students were submitting their extern applications and really starting the interview process. So to take it back a little bit further, in 2006, AAA did post a suggested timeline of when they thought the externship should be submitting extern applications and also starting the interview process. And they set that guideline as around March should sites start offering those externship positions. That worked for quite a while until it didn't work.

So what happened was clinics kept moving their application deadlines and interviews up earlier and earlier to where they actually started having application deadlines and interviews in late summer and early September. This caused a few different problems. So one of those problems is for those sites that were still following the AAA guideline and having their interviews in spring offering those positions in March, they weren't getting as many applicants and candidates showing up for the interviews because those applicants and candidates had already accepted elsewhere at those externship sites that were having earlier interviews. So that caused a few different problems. And one of those problems being they weren't yet having those specialized placements.

So a lot of times for our four year programs, students will start having those more specialized placements in the fall of their third year. And for three year programs, they might have more of those specialized placements and the fall of their second year. So if they're already interviewing and submitting their applications in summer early fall, they may not even know if they're having a specialized placement and they definitely would not have that experience. So for some of those students that are interested in children's hospitals or more comprehensive vestibular workups, those larger medical settings, they might not have had any of that sufficient coursework, putting them at a great disadvantageous when they're applying for that site. So I am the extern coordinator at a larger medical setting, and one of the first things I always look at is do they have any ent experience?

Have they been placed at a medical setting before? And if they haven't been, I immediately think this might not be a great fit or the best match for our placement. So again, really putting the students at a disadvantage of if they're interested in those medical settings, children's hospitals, when they're applying, they're not able to show that they've had that experience or that they're about to have that experience. Also, students were unable to interview at later dates because the earlier interviews had already taken place. And they may have been pressuring the students to accept their offer before they could even interview at those later dates.

So again, what was happening for the clinics is they didn't have many candidates interviewing later on. And then some of the students felt like they might be pressured into accepting their an offer, even if it wasn't their first or second choice, in fear that they might not obtain an additional offer at those later interview dates. So you can see this nonstandardized timeline created a lot of disorganization and it didn't have a good flow for when extern application should be submitted and that interview process. And our hope was that ACN could really help reduce or eliminate some of these problems that were happening. So with that being said, I'm going to pass it now over to Erin to discuss the academic program perspective.

Thanks, Kaylee. Yeah. From the academic program perspective, I think there are a few items that students should be aware of regarding the externship process that may not have been considered. It wouldn't come to the top of their minds. I appreciate that students are probably much more focused on determining the site location, where they might want to live.

Looking at the facility type itself, do they want a large hospital setting? Do they want a smaller private practice? Do they want a VA setting? Or even the services that are provided in those facilities, all of which are really very important. But there are other issues that need to be considered that you may not have considered as you navigate through this process in order for the process to come to fruition from just the site location to then actually starting your externship.

First, I would say to any student, your academic program should be actively involved in both assisting you in identifying sites that's going to allow you to grow your clinical and professional skills and then meet program competencies, but they should also be there and actively assisting you in the application process. Now, I get that may look a little different from program to program. You should be talking with your faculty advisor or the program director to determine who on the faculty is actually responsible for assisting students in this process. Now, there may be different titles for the individuals who may assist you. So, you know, you might have on your faculty somebody who's called a clinical education director, or maybe there's a final placement year coordinator, and that's the individual that you would be working with directly to help you both select and then complete the application process.

And they may do that differently. Their approach may be different. Perhaps they provide lists or they provide resources on where you can look for sites. So it could look a little bit different. But regardless of the title or their process, someone on the faculty should be identified as the individual that's going to advise you and your peers throughout this process.

I think now what we're seeing, and part of this has been really the ACEN, is we are finding more clinical sites that require faculty members to be engaged in this process from the beginning. Perhaps the faculty member is who has been identified in this advisory role to the students. Maybe they need to actually verify that the students academic and clinical readiness allows them to actually begin applying for externships. So having the knowledge of who is going to assist you is really quite important, I will say, from the perspective of an academic program. And this is really this ACEN process, and the timeline has been driven by the clinical facilities who really don't benefit significantly from this.

This is really to help students, and I appreciate them wanting to be involved and taking this on and really trying to create a consistent process, both through application and then the interview and then the acceptance of the positions. So it certainly has allowed me, as the individual in our program that assists our students in this process, to develop a more streamlined approach to this. I certainly have less concern over missing deadlines that was mentioned earlier, and those deadlines were occurring at multiple times throughout the summer term, throughout our fall terms, often into the spring semester. And, you know, it was making it really challenging for me. In our program at NOAC, I've been identified as the faculty member who submits applications for the students.

So our students do not submit their own applications. They come through me so that the clinical facilities receive all of the materials together in one folder, electronic folder. And that makes it easier for them, and it makes it easier for our faculty who are completing letters of recommendation for students, that they don't have to do that multiple times, and that I can take care of that for them. I know that in other programs, students are responsible for that. And you submit your own applications, and as I think Kaylee had mentioned, it really made it challenging for the students because you're still doing other things, and yet you have to stay on track with these multiple deadlines that could easily be missed.

I would say that many of the sites have some type of onboarding requirements, such as HIPAA or other trainings that need to be completed. And as students, again, you're still in classes, you're still in other clinic rotations, and you have many responsibilities for what you're doing currently, and yet you have these other obligations so that you can move on to that final year externship. So having ample time to be able to complete these requirements for that externship has been extremely helpful to both the program and to our students. Additionally, some of the states have provisional licensure requirements and that needs to be completed before the student can start the externship. And so this timeline that they've created, and it has been modified over the first couple years, I think really does allow the student to meet all of those obligations so that the student is ready to start their externship at the typical timeline in mid May or mid June.

I think with changing state laws. What we have found in some of my colleagues here in Ohio is that it's really important that the academic programs have ample time to negotiate the affiliation agreement with the clinical facilities. These are the contractual agreements that outline the responsibilities of all the parties involved, all of the stakeholders in this. That includes the student, the academic program, and the clinical site throughout, you know, the process. So it, it talks about, you know, what's necessary for you to get started and then what responsibilities they have for you as you move through the externship itself.

So council from both facilities are involved in that process. And this is clearly not the only thing the council at the academic program does or at the facility. They're responsible for many other things. So having several months to actually negotiate and get to a fully executed agreement is necessary so that you can start on time. I think, you know, academic programs also have to gather credentials from the clinical preceptors at the facility to ensure meet their program requirements.

And there are oftentimes additional software that we're using to track everything from clinical hours to your clinical evaluations that are completed. And we need to ensure that the preceptors that the students are working with have access to all of those software programs. And that takes some time as well. So we want to make sure we can get that done and ready to go. And then finally, from the student perspective, just finding housing, you're going to need enough time to be able to travel.

If you're traveling further from your academic program, you don't know the area. You need to do that again while you're still taking classes and assigned to these other clinical rotations. And from the program perspective, I certainly don't want that to negatively impact where you are now because you're planning for the next year of the program. We want you to stay focused on your current progress in the program. So the end of the October timeline for acceptances has really allowed us to more effectively manage all of those program requirements.

So I'm going to pass this over to Katherine. Perfect. Thanks so much, Erin. So I'm going to talk to you a little bit about the ACN by showing you a little bit of the website, but it's in the framework of what we've been talking about, you know, really wanting to think of all the components that you've just been hearing, the student perspective, clinical site perspective, academic perspective, and wanting to bring that together and see where we can go. And again, to really support students, but ending up supporting all the different players, you know, that become involved in this process.

So in red, you can see the website address. You're welcome, obviously, to log on. Check this out. Anybody can view this. I would have you think about whether you're a student or you're a clinical site or you're in an educational role, to include this website in communications that you have back and forth between these parties.

I think it's helpful to let people know if you're following the guidelines. And part of this, it gets people to know about it, check it out, and become involved. So there's several hundred clinics now on this site,

and many, many of them have multiple externship offerings. So a lot of externships are now represented. There's certainly more out there.

And we see right now is a time especially that clinics are coming in and signing up because we'll be seeing this process getting going with students. So seeing more join daily, which is great as well. So I'm just starting off on a slide that happens to show the timeline. As you've been hearing all the different components. ACN is bigger than having a timeline, although we have spent a lot of time the last few years trying to really, I don't know if the words perfect, but get this timeline where we wanted to be having a lot of input from all the different stakeholders.

And so the timeline you're seeing here will extend also to 2025. So two years in a row, same timeline. So we're pretty happy about settling into that. And what you see when you look at it is there's a deadline for applications, so you can be applying anytime. People already have postings if you look on this and their sites are gathering applications.

But applications can keep coming in until September 18. And then initial offers in terms of interviews, whether that's in person or virtual, would start being made on Monday, September 23. So this was a change to extend a little more time. So the places had time to review applications, get their offers out for the interviews, and then interviews start right away, that same day. Technically, you could be interviewing, I guess, that afternoon and the final days of interviews would end Friday, October 25.

And so that's when that round of interviews end. So that's official, that official time period. And so something we'll come back to, as I'm talking is offers can be made at any time and students can accept that offer. If that's their number one choice and they get the offer, they should accept. But an offer can be made, but a student can't be required to respond until the end of this period.

And so what that is, that end of this period is Friday, October Eastern, 04:00 p.m. pacific. So even if an offer is made earlier in that interview period, if the student isn't sure if they have another interview coming up, they can wait to tell whether they'll accept that offer and it can't be rescinded. And then offers can be made right away again if a student declines the offer. And then just last year, I guess last year we added to repost sites who don't necessarily find an extern in that process and externs who didn't find a site, sites can repost, which has really been a nice feature, I think for a lot of people this past year, a lot of matches were made.

I guess one piece of good news for the students listening, there are definitely more externship sites than students. So that panic, you might feel that you won't have an externship really, you shouldn't be panicking because there are more of the sites than there are of you. So that puts you in a good, good position. So if you go on the website, you can sort through all of them, you can sort by state, you can sort by the practice, you can, you know, alphabetically, any, any way you want. So you can see what's here.

And when you click on the location, then you go into lots more detail that the site has uploaded so you can see more information about them.

And then there are resources, and these keep growing. And our goal for next year is actually to really enhance the toolkit for students placements in academic programs. But one of the newest tools we have on here is tutorials for the clinic sites who want to streamline the application process and use something like Qualtrics or Google forms or things like that, that let them really make that process a little more convenient for them to get everything in and not be getting hundreds of emails from different people. So we keep looking for those value added pieces. So I told you about this timeline.

And so, like I said, what happens is as soon as you interview a site could offer you a position at that point all the way to the end of when we offer which is October 25. And if you know that's the site you

want, you should accept it and you want to then make sure you withdraw from all the other sites. This is why it's great if students are working with their academic person so they're both in the loop about what's happening, but you don't have to accept it. You can say you're going to wait until further into the process, or if you know you don't want to take that because something else has come up, then you want to immediately decline. And this is asking students to be part of this positive process to make sure we're not, in a sense abusing our clinics and keeping them on hold when students have made other decisions.

So everybody has to play their role.

So then the timeline, like I said, ends when offers have to have been made and then students have to make a decision at that point of any offer they have. And then subsequent offers can begin immediately that day, after 07:00 p.m. eastern standard Time. And they're reposting of physicians as well if someone didn't match or a clinic didn't find an extern. So we did revise and I mentioned a few of the things.

We get a lot of input from students, from academic centers and then all of the clinical network. And so we've made a number of changes based on that in the timeline. And then this year we've added streamlining that application process. It's not a universal application process, so you don't go on an ACN and apply that way. And we decided not to pursue that when we realized a lot of different clinics want different materials.

Some you need to actually apply through their hr because you're being paid. So instead we tried to give tools to streamline it, but it's not one application process at this point.

So everybody really has to follow and take responsibility for their parts. And I am going to turn this over to Meredith. Great. So as Katherine just mentioned here in the presentation, we really transition to

talking about the responsibilities, each party that make this process work and make this process a success. So from the student perspective, students should really think of this process as a professional commitment.

The externship application and decision making process should really be viewed as similar to the graduate school application process. The match or the fit between the externship site and the student needs to be right because it's a huge force in shaping the student professionally. So what do students need to do to make this process work? Well, first of all, students need to follow the timeline discussed earlier and hit all of the deadlines. You know, the timeline being standardized and remaining standardized relies on not only the externship sites committing to these application and offer dates, but also on students staying true to these deadlines by getting all of their materials in on time and updating the sites with decisions on time.

I'll also say students need to engage in a timely and open form of communication with both their academic program and the clinical sites. As a group here on this webinar, we recommend that students actually cc their academic advisor on all communications with sites to keep everyone on the same page. You know, effective open communication in this externship decision process really sets the stage for all of the communication that will occur in the next year between the student and the academic program and the clinical site. Students also should be involved in the preparation process, including site ranking and consideration of logistics. When it comes to externship sites, we want to emphasize that students do actually have a lot of power in this process, particularly in laying out and communicating their expectations of externship sites.

And students should openly communicate these expectations and thoughts with their academic programs when considering the various sites. As I mentioned, students have a lot of power, yet they should also not feel alone in this process. A clear timeline really allows for collaboration between

students and academic programs so students feel supported in making their best decision. Students are encouraged to talk to their academic advisor about their options to weigh the pros and cons of each particular externship. You know, things to think about regarding the externship decision include logistics, so cost of living in a particular location, any financial offerings from the externship.

You know, what it's like to live in a particular place. Students should consider the mentorship and clinical opportunities at each site, what services they'll be providing as an extern, who they will directly report to, how many times the student may meet with a preceptor during the experience. These discussions may even involve the academic advisor connecting the student with folks who have externed at particular sites in the past. Again, this discussion is all about sort of figuring out the best match. Having these conversations early on allows for students to ask informed decisions and ask informed questions during interviews in the continued quest to find the match.

And then in terms of communication at the least, students should plan on touching base with their academic advisor before formally putting out an acceptance for an offer. Once a decision is made, students are expected to follow through with their commitments. This means withdrawing all other applications after a commitment is made, ensuring all sites in consideration are aware so opportunities can be made available to others who may be interested in those sites. Barring life altering changes, students are also expected to inform academic programs of any deviations that follow the decision that made earlier. I now want to pass the mic to Erin who will talk about the academic program's responsibilities in this process.

And before I start, I just want to remind everybody that you can post some questions in the Q and A, and we will leave some time at the end so we can answer those questions live because there probably are others who may have follow up questions to our answers. So, as I indicated previously, and I know some of this may sound a bit redundant, but I do think there are shared responsibilities that the

students and the academic programs have as well. And I think the academic programs being involved in this process is really critical. To make the process work both effectively and efficiently, students should be advised by their programs to only apply to facilities where they would be financially able to reside should the site offer them an externship position. The site may be in a fabulous location.

It may provide all the services that you would like to experience across the breadth of audiologic practice. But if you can't afford to reside in a location that's at least relatively close to the site, you really shouldn't apply. The faculty member responsible for advising students through this process cannot possibly know the finances of every student in the program. So requiring the students to complete a financial assessment relative to the cost of rent and groceries and transportation at minimum, I believe, is a necessary step, at least for those sites that fall outside a reasonable radius of the academic program. For example, you know, the NOAC program is located in northeast Ohio.

I don't require our students to submit financial analyses of any sites in Ohio. They've been living here for three years. I don't require them to analyze Michigan or Pennsylvania because our costs of living are relatively similar. But you know, this is really not a difficult process. There are online sites where you can actually compare the cost of living between states and also cities within states.

So you can easily get on a site and evaluate the cost of living in that particular area. You know, if a student is considering applying for a position in LA or New York or Honolulu, where I know the cost of living is much higher, they really have to demonstrate that they have the financial means to live in that city. I mean, sometimes their family lives there. So if they can let me know that all of their rent costs would be reduced because they'll be living with a family member, you know, that would satisfy the need for our analysis for them to be moving to one of these larger cities. I think, you know, from my perspective, as, you know, part of the academic program, I want to ensure that there's a smooth transition from their didactic work on campus to this final year externship, and that financial issues

aren't going to negatively impact the student's externship position.

I believe it's our responsibility as the academic program to continue to be a good steward of this process and not submit applications that need to be reviewed by sites. And then really the student can't even consider the site because they can't possibly afford to live in that location. This really isn't about collecting offers of externship. You shouldn't want to waste someone's time at the facility, and you shouldn't be wasting your time in applying places where you may not be able to reside. I think it's really important from my perspective, and I hope the academic programs would agree, that we ensure that students notify the sites once they've accepted and decided on where they will move for their externship.

I think it's important that we require the students to not only, you know, send a nice thank you to the site where they're accepting the position, but also that they respond to any site that has either read through their application materials or has provided them an opportunity to interview. I require the students cc me on those responses so that I know that it has been completed. I do appreciate that some of the sites want the students to respond by phone, and that's great. They can also complete that, but also put it in writing as well. This then lets the site know that as the academic program, I will be in contact with them shortly to begin the next steps that will be necessary, like the affiliation agreement and other materials that may need to be completed.

It's also then my reminder to the students to indicate that, you know, they've applied to these other sites, they haven't heard from them, they're still outstanding, and they need to alert those sites again, ceasing me, thanking them for the opportunity or for, you know, at least the review of their materials. I think that's, you know, we live in a small community of audiologists, and we certainly don't want to burn any bridges in this very small profession. And while you may not be accepting that fourth year position at that site, you may want to actually work at that site as a professional. And I think, you know, people

have long memories, so we want to take care of these issues in just a professional manner. The facilities are all very much aware that students are applying to multiple sites, they appreciate that they simply just want the professional courtesy from the student applicants that they've already accepted a site and they're ready to, then they can go and provide opportunities for other students who are on their waitlist for those positions.

And finally, it's my opinion that the academics program should require students that once they make this final decision, the decision is final, barring again, any kind of catastrophic event in their life. I think that once you as a student accept the position, the facilities themselves are then notifying all of the other applicants. They remove the position from their application portals. So sometimes this is a very large process for them to get this started again. So if you are prioritizing your applications as you submit them, and then again after you complete your interview, you should be ready to make decisions once you receive the offers.

Your decision this year is, you know, to accept and then renege could negatively impact your program's ability to place future students in that particular facility. So, you know, we just simply do not allow this in our program. So that if that catastrophic event occurs, and it has happened a couple times in my 14 years of managing the externship process, I then step in and contact the site on behalf of that student. And those sites have always been willing because I've been able to explain the events that occurred and why this is a necessary step to ensure the student has a reasonable externship in light of these events. So, you know, please don't negatively impact the future of other students in your program by not following through with some of these professional courtesies.

So I'm going to pass it back over to Kaylee. Thank you. So I just want to reiterate, what we've already discussed is that it is completely voluntary for clinical sites to be a part of the ACN and follow these guidelines. There are a couple different ways that it can be communicated by the sites that they are

following these ACEN guidelines. And I just want to go over a couple of those points, especially as students are looking for sites to apply to try to pay attention to if these sites are following the ACA guidelines.

For one, clinic sites can post on hear careers. A lot of times that is the first time students will see that a site has a posting up and they can simply just state that they are in compliance with AC and guidelines. So as students, please make sure when you're reading over the requirements for that site that they're following the ACN guidelines. And then another way to communicate compliance is when sites post on the ACN website. So as of this year, it is a requirement to re up your posting or renew your posting on the ACN website.

So students, as you're looking on the ACEN website to see what clinic sites are up there, if they are posted, they are in compliance with the AC and guidelines. So those are two good ways to ensure that you're applying to sites that are following these guidelines. I also want to quickly remind student applicants of what Erin was just talking about, about the responsibility to notify sites when they have made a decision. So if you interview at a site and you know that is the best fit for you and that's where you want to spend your externship year, you can let them know right away. So that way if those spots are filled, the clinic sites can let other students know that they no longer have any open positions and those students can move on to their decision at other sites.

Also, if you know that that is not the best fit for you and there's absolutely no way that you are going to be accepting an offer at the site that just made you an offer, please let them know that you will be rejecting and you can let them know that right away so that way they can move on to other students that that might be a better fit for and have interest in that placement. As Erin was saying, it's just professional courtesy to make sure that the students are getting the best fit at the clinical placements instead of missing out on those opportunities. It is really important, and I know this has already been

stressed, that the clinical sites start communicating with the externship coordinators as soon as possible. So over the past couple of years, since I joined the ACNH, as soon as I receive student applications, I immediately reach out to their academic university. So that way we can start working together.

And then if that student does spend their externship year at our facility, we are in open lines of communication and reaching out to discuss and make sure that the student is growing and meeting the expectations that are set for our site. So very important.

And then I also just want to talk briefly about how clinic sites can offer the extern candidate a position immediately following the interview. So again, let us know if you know you're going to accept. Let us know right away. If you know you're going to reject, then go ahead and let us know right away as well. However, you do not have to make that decision until that deadline established by the ACN.

So if you still have more interviews and you are unsure of what is the best fit for you or where you want to spend your externship year. Please, please, please know that you do not need to make that decision immediately after an offer is made to you. And no clinic should be pressuring you to make that decision prior to that deadline established by the ACEN and to finish up again. Just having the clinical sites work very closely with the academic program. Our number one goal of the externship program and what the ACN is set out to also help with is making sure that the students are learning and progressing where they should be so that they're ready to be a licensed professional upon graduation.

As others have mentioned, externs are not another employee. They are there to learn and grow so that they can be an excellent audiologist upon graduation. So just hoping that we can work together more throughout the year with the universities and the clinic sites, I think that will be really helpful and I will pass it back over to Charlotte. Great. Thanks Kaylee.

Oops, I jumped a little too fast. So certainly the next steps of the audiology clinical education network you can see right here on this slide. We want to continue to address all of the constituent parties, continue to build on our past experiences, taking into account all of the comments from the students about their externship experiences, and also to provide additional continuing education opportunities to both students and professionals. I did want to mention two just very quick things from my previous panelists. One is that the current clinical sites have until July 1 to update their information on the AcEn website.

So if you happen to jump on today or tomorrow, there may be sites that participated last year who may or may not be continuing to participate for the upcoming cycle. We've also added, at the request of some smaller private practices, some icons on the page that lists clinic sites by state so that students, as you're scrolling through, if you want a pediatric placement, you can see what places offer pediatrics or geriatrics or vestibular or hearing aids or cochlear implants, whatever, to meet your educational goals. And with that, I'm going to turn it back to Katherine for questions. Yeah, we have some great questions so let's do those. And why don't you go ahead to the last slide with contact information so if we don't answer your questions, you can definitely reach out to us.

The first question I'll just answer quickly was, if an offer is made and you don't accept it, you as a student say, you know, I'm not sure yet. Can that offer be rescinded if the place continues to interact? The answer is no. If they're participating with ACN that cannot be rescinded. So if they're on the ACN website, they've agreed to participate.

They can't rescind that offer. You have until the deadline. Next question is, do you recommend students reach out to programs directly so that's the clinic directly to learn more about the clinic before they interview or should they wait for the interview? Charlotte, I'm going to throw that over to you. What do you think?

You know, I do know that there's some academic programs that. I've already gotten some inquiries from the academic program. Some have some. An official form that they ask us to fill out. On the clinical side, I think it's the student.

The students should be in touch. Should the students be in touch? You know, I think, again, it's probably best to go through your academic advisor. You know, quite honestly, from the clinical side, we do tend to get a lot of applications and if I'm getting a lot of emails asking me questions beyond the information that's in the posting, it gets to be too overwhelming. So I'm more than happy to work with an academic program and say, gosh, I see you've got three students who are interested in our placement.

What can I tell you that you can share with them? Okay. And probably students go on the website, you can learn a lot about the program so you're ready for the interview, but otherwise wait till the interview.

The next one. Is, is the ACN required to obtain a placement?

Why don't you take that, Erin?

Yeah, it's not a requirement. Certainly there are some facilities that don't participate within the ACN timeline. I know there are some academic programs that are encouraging those other facilities. Once they do take one of our students, I do it all the time. Will you participate moving forward in ACN?

And we have seen that movement because I think it's just a wonderful way for students to be able to have all of their offers at once if they choose and then make decisions or at least know that they're not going to lose one if they're waiting for their number one choice and they've already been offered, because if you're in ACN, they're not going to give your placement to somebody else. So I would encourage facilities to participate. Yeah, it's definitely voluntary, but the more who do it, the more we can get this organized. And it's top of the hour. I know people are logging off, but we have an international student who has a question that I know comes up a lot.

And Kaylee, I'll throw it to you. First. So she's saying that a lot of clinics assume an international student needs a sponsorship and then they feel like they might not even get an interview because the place is worried. What would that look like financially? She happens to be an international student that does not need a sponsorship and she's wondering if in her application she should make that clear.

So, you guys know, one way or another. And I'd love to hear Kaylee and Erin, I would actually love to hear your input as well. Kaylee first. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So I think it never hurts to mention what, whatever.

Think you could be helpful for that site. So that is not something I have a lot of experience with. So I'll defer that over to Erin. But I personally, if you were applying to our site, I think that would be helpful to include that information. And I think as, I think as the academic program, when I send out the email to the site with all of their materials, that's something I would mention directly in that email.

You may notice this is an international student. I want you to be aware no sponsorship would be required. They're still considered a student and I would think that's probably typical. They're still on a student visa and so there shouldn't be a problem. But sites may not understand that.

So I think coming from the academic program, it may carry a bit more weight and I think sites don't understand it. So I think you're great to educate. I will just say to this student and others coming from an employer perspective, so we're a big medical center. We're not allowed to ask you. Just so you know, that's an HR issue.

If you make the qualification for us to interview you, we are meant to interview you and you're an applicant. We're not even allowed to ask that question. So just, just kind of a heads up for that individual. Thanks, everybody. This has been great.

I appreciate everybody listening. This is recorded so people can continue to access this. And it's always fun to work with audiology online. Excellent. Thank you so much.

Could you move on to the last slide for me? We'll wrap things up. Thank you all. This has been a most fascinating information. So jam packed with information.

Poor people. We appreciate all of your time and expertise. I want those of you joining us today. I want to thank you for attending and don't remind you to complete your exam after the event is over. The exam will be available about ten to 15 minutes after we conclude.

Simply log into your account, go to pending courses, choose, take your exam, and if you are attending the live session today. Make sure and complete the exam within the next seven days. We appreciate you joining us and hope to see you again in future courses on audiology. Online line thanks, everybody. Have a wonderful day.

Thanks.