

# **QUALITY IN ENTRY-LEVEL CLINIICAL DOCTORATES**

## **AN ACCREDITATION PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Review of CAA actions to-date and rationale**

The transition from an accredited master's degree to the Au.D. was originally viewed as a substantive change in academic programs. The CAA developed a Substantive Change Plan which required programs to answer questions regarding the changes the program would make to accommodate the new degree level. The questions dealt with the five areas of accreditation standards: faculty, curriculum, practicum, admissions, and facilities/financial support.

Programs planning to consolidate resources in order to offer the clinical doctoral degree as a consortium were required to respond to two lists of questions; one regarding changes in degree level and the other addressing organization of the consortium.

### **Limitations in the current accreditation procedures**

When programs began submitting the Substantive Change Plan for change of degree from the master's to clinical doctorate several problems became evident. Programs did not fully answer the questions which required several more exchanges between the CAA and the program and delayed the accreditation process. Another problem was that the information provided was often by necessity in the form of projections rather than a track record of performance. It became apparent that the CAA needed to clarify the information required from programs and to more closely define

what was required for accreditation. Areas which need to be clarified and questions which need to be resolved include:

- Faculty - number and qualifications (Au.D., Ph.D., other)
- Relationship between program and practicum sites (especially for those using the fourth-year experience model)
- Is a four-year model the best model?
- What type of exposure to research is appropriate for a clinical doctorate?
- Is a clinical doctorate a graduate degree or first professional degree?
- What distinguishes a clinical doctoral program from a master's program beyond the scope of practice covered and the increased practicum?

### **What is CAA doing?**

The CAA has an active agenda regarding accreditation of clinical doctoral programs. Our activities include:

- A. Standards review and revision: The CAA is currently involved in a comprehensive review of accreditation standards. Along with reviewing the existing standards for clarity and appropriateness, we are also asking the following questions:
- Can we have one set of standards for SLP and Audiology?
  - Does the link between certification and accreditation still serve us well?
  - Do practicum sites need to be accredited and by whom?
- B. Meeting with AAA and CAPCSD: The Executive Committee of the CAA is meeting in July with representatives of the American Academy of Audiology and the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders to allow those organizations input to the standards review process.

- C. Cooperating with ASHA in planning for series of meeting to plan a “summit meeting” in late 2004 to discuss quality indicators in doctoral education.
- D. Persuaded the National Center for Educational Statistics to extend the first professional degree to include audiology.
- E. CAA has sent a survey to program directors of all accredited programs asking for opinions regarding the current accreditation standards and asking for suggestions for improvement.