



Questions and Answers regarding CASLPA Membership and Clinical Certification for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

1. What is CASLPA Clinical Certification?

- The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists (CASLPA) developed the clinical certification program in 1987 and it is available for full members who meet the requirements. There are two parts to the program: the certification examination and the continuing education component.
- The national examinations are developed by committees of clinical and academic members from across Canada with expertise in various areas of the scopes of practice, in consultation with Assessment Strategies Inc. The examinations are based on the document: *Assessing and Certifying Clinical Competency: Foundations of Practice for Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists* (2004). This document was developed by clinicians and academics as a framework for the training of speech-language pathologists and audiologists and undergoes periodic review. The accreditation of Canadian university programs is also based on this document.
- To become clinically certified, full members or those internationally trained professionals in the process of assessment for membership, must meet the supervised clinical hours requirement and pass the national examination in their professional area.
- The continuing education requirement for those who have passed the examination is a minimum of 45 hours of continuing education over a three year cycle. There are various categories of continuing education activities. Clinically certified members can report these activities on-line or by hard copy and can access annual reports of continuing education credits.

2. How can you tell if someone holds the CASLPA clinical certification designation?

- Certified CASLPA members use the clinical certification trademark: S-LP(C) or Aud(C). This signifies that they have passed the national certification examination in their professional area, maintain current membership status, and meet the ongoing continuing education requirements (45 hours over a three year cycle).

3. What is the difference between clinical certification and licensing?

- CASLPA clinical certification is a voluntary program, unique to the national professional association, for members who complete the requirements for it. Licensing is a permit to practice and is mandatory in provinces with legislation. Clinical certification is not a license to practice. In Canada, speech-language pathologists and audiologists currently must apply for a license to practice in seven provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. A license or registration is obtained from the regulatory body/college/association in the particular province. In the other provinces and territories, many employers require membership in the provincial professional association and/or national association. CASLPA clinical certification may be recognized as evidence of meeting the academic and clinical requirements in Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Regulatory bodies and professional associations have different but complimentary roles: regulatory bodies are legislated to protect the public and professional associations exist to support the professionals.

4. Is CASLPA clinical certification mandatory to work in any province or territory?

- NO. CASLPA clinical certification is voluntary and is a separate designation offered to members who have earned and maintained it. It is not a requirement for licensing by any of the seven Canadian regulatory bodies. However, some of the regulatory bodies may require those trained outside of Canada or Canadian applicants who have not been engaged in recent practice to pass the CASLPA clinical certification examination as a requirement for their licensing. Also some Canadian regulators recognize internationally trained professionals who are CASLPA clinically certified as meeting their licensing requirements as noted above. Some employers and consumers may prefer professionals who hold clinical certification.
- Clinical sites that hold accreditation with CASLPA through the Canadian Accreditation of Service Programs (CASP) program have a requirement for CASLPA clinical certification as one of their standards.

5 If it is not mandatory to hold the clinical certification designation, why do people bother?

- There are many advantages to holding the clinical certification designation from CASLPA:
 - Members value the credential as a professional designation developed by their national association of peers.
 - The credential is available to qualifying full members, regardless of the university program from which they graduated.
 - The national examination content is updated regularly based on current research and changing scope of practice.
 - It gives professionals an opportunity to demonstrate and compare their academic knowledge and applied clinical problem solving skills with the graduates of other programs.
 - Clinical sites that are accredited by CASLPA through CASP have quality control standards requiring clinical certification of employees and supervisors. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists clinically certified by CASLPA may have an advantage over other applicants at CASP certified sites.
 - It assures employers and consumers using the professionals' services that they are committed to maintaining currency through ongoing education.
 - Our world is a mobile one. Professionals want to travel and have work experiences in other countries. CASLPA clinical certification helps professionals become recognized in major English speaking countries because CASLPA has developed mutual recognition agreements for speech-language pathologist certified members with the following international professional organizations: ASHA, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Speech Pathology Australia, the New Zealand Speech Therapists Association and the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists. It is a designation that consumers may prefer when selecting a private practitioner.
 - Some private insurers require CASLPA clinical certification for reimbursement.
 - It indicates that the professional has sought qualifications beyond what is mandatory to work in their chosen profession and are committed to continuing education in their field.

6 In the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) professionals don't need to be a member to hold certification. Can I be "Clinically Certified-Only" with CASLPA?

- NO. Professionals need to first qualify to be a member of CASLPA and then may advance to achieving clinical certification. There is no additional fee for becoming clinically certified or maintaining clinical certification except the fee to write the exam. American legislation requires that certification and membership be separate and there are fees for each. This is not the case in Canada.

7. Why do I have to maintain my membership with CASLPA to retain my clinical certification?

- Although members need only pass the clinical certification examination once, clinical certification is an ongoing process, is internationally recognized and a benefit of membership. The examination ensures a certain knowledge base at the time of writing; the second component of clinical certification, the continuing education component, ensures that certified members pursue upgrading in their field.

8. What are the costs associated with CASLPA clinical certification?

- There is a fee to write the clinical certification examination but no separate fee beyond this for clinical certification. Members and clinically certified members pay the same membership fee.
- However, if members drop their membership or do not meet the continuing education requirement they will lose their certification and can only regain it by rejoining the association and successfully passing the certification exam.

10. Do I have to pass the CASLPA clinical certification exam to become a member of CASLPA?

- Graduates from Canadian programs DO NOT have to pass the clinical certification examination to become a member of CASLPA. Canadian graduates can choose to be a full member of the Association or can choose to become a clinically certified (full) member of CASLPA. Clinical certification is not mandatory, rather a benefit available to full members that many speech-language pathologists and audiologists, employers and consumers highly value.
- However, international graduates, other than speech-language pathologists who hold their ASHA CCCs, are required to pass the examination to become a member after meeting the academic and supervised clinical practicum requirements.

11. If I am a current member of CASLPA, how can I become clinically certified?

- Graduates from a Canadian program, must have their university transcripts and the verified CASLPA record of supervised clinical practicum hours submitted to CASLPA. The requirement for supervised clinical hours is 350 hours in various areas of practice prior to graduation, whereas the requirement for CASLPA membership is a total of 300 hours. The applicant must then pass the CASLPA clinical certification exam in either audiology or speech-language pathology or both if they were trained in both.
- Application forms are available from the CASLPA website:
www.caslpa.ca/PDF/Certification/Eng_Exam_App_Package.pdf
- There is also a Q and A on the certification examination on the website:
www.caslpa.ca/english/certification/faq.asp