

**ACCREDITATION ACTION REPORT**  
**Reaccreditation Review**

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology took the following accreditation action at its July 19-22, 2023 meeting, as indicated below.

**Name of Program: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**File #: 245**

**Professional Area:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Audiology</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Speech-Language Pathology</b>

**Modality:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Residential</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Distance Education</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Satellite Campus</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Contractual Arrangement</b>

**Degree Designator(s): MS**

**Current Accreditation Cycle: 07/01/2015 – 06/30/2023**

**Action Taken: Continue Accreditation**

**Effective Date: July 22, 2023**

**New Accreditation Cycle: 07/01/2023 – 06/30/2031**

**Next Review: Annual Report due August 1, 2024**

**Notices:** The program is advised to adhere to the following notices that are appended to this report.

- PROGRAM COMPLIANCE EXPECTATIONS
- PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS

*In the context of the institutional and program mission statements and in consideration of the credentials for which the program is preparing students, the CAA conducted its comprehensive review and found the program to be in compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, except as noted below.*

## **AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

The CAA found the program to be not in compliance with the following Standards for Accreditation. Non-compliance means that the program does not have in place the essential elements necessary to meet the standard. The program must demonstrate its compliance with these standards when responding to prior concerns in the next annual report or reaccreditation application or by the time line specified below. The CAA will indicate in its review of that report whether the program has addressed these areas sufficiently to achieve compliance. **Failure to demonstrate compliance with the standards may jeopardize the program's accreditation status or require the CAA to place the program on probation. A program will be placed on probation or accreditation withdrawn after the review of a second consecutive report reveals that issues continue for the same standard(s) and the program remains not in full compliance with all standards (effective January 1, 2021- see [CAA Accreditation Handbook, Chapter XVII](#)).**

**Standard 2.2 The number, composition, and workload of all full-time faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program are sufficient to allow them to meet expectations with regard to teaching, research, and service of the sponsoring institution.**

### **Requirement for Review:**

- The program must demonstrate that all faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program and have obligations to provide clinical education and services as part of their workload:
  - Are accessible to students

### **Evidence of Non-Compliance:**

At the time of the program's site visit on March 2-3, 2023, the site visitors were unable to verify that the program had sufficient clinical faculty to be accessible to students based on interviews with faculty and students. In its response to the site visit report, the program stated that students perceived that faculty workloads are demanding to the point that there is insufficient time for clinical faculty to meet with students to discuss clients seen in clinic or to sign clinical paperwork in a timely fashion. While the program noted that the students' impression is accurate, the program explained that the insufficiency of time is a result of assigning too little workload credit per student supervised in clinic, resulting in insufficient time for clinical faculty to meet with students on a consistent and sustained basis. The program also reported that it created a policy that allows clinical faculty who teach academic courses to be assigned no more than one section of clinical practicum per semester to allow faculty to be more accessible to students, and that clinical faculty will receive additional workload credits for each student supervised. The program reports that the new policy will take effect beginning in the fall 2023 semester.

### **Steps to Be Taken:**

At the time of the next annual report, the program must provide an update on the implementation of the new policy intended to address faculty workload concerns and to provide evidence that clinical faculty who have responsibility in the program to provide clinical education are accessible to students.

## AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP (clarification/verification)

The CAA did not find the program to be out of compliance with the following Standards for Accreditation at this time. However, the program must provide additional information or an update in the program's next annual report or reaccreditation application for clarification or verification of these issues, in order to monitor the program's continued compliance in the stated areas.

**Standard 2.1 The number and composition of the program faculty (academic doctoral, clinical doctoral, other) are sufficient to deliver a program of study that:**

- 2.1.1 allows students to acquire the knowledge and skills required in Standard 3,**
- 2.1.2 allows students to acquire the scientific and research fundamentals of the discipline,**
- 2.1.3 allows students to meet the program's established goals and objectives,**
- 2.1.4 meets the expectations set forth in the program's mission and goals,**
- 2.1.5 is offered on a regular basis so that it will allow the students to complete the program within the published time frame**

**Requirement for Review:**

- The program must document
  - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to meet the expectations set forth in the program's mission and goals

**Evidence of Concern:**

The program reported in its accreditation application that it did not have sufficient full-time faculty to provide clinical supervision in its Speech and Hearing Center, but had resolved the issue as of fall 2022 with the hiring of a full-time clinical assistant professor which alleviated the need to hire part-time clinical supervisors. In its response to the site visit report's concerns around Standard 2.2, the program acknowledged that it did not have a sufficient number of clinical faculty to meet with students, as evidenced by students interviewed during the site visit. The program reported that it created a policy that allows clinical faculty who teach academic courses to be assigned no more than one section of clinical practicum per semester to allow faculty to be more accessible to students. The program reports that the new policy will take effect beginning in the fall 2023 semester.

**Steps to Be Taken:**

At the time of the next annual report, the program must provide an update on the status of the clinical faculty hire to demonstrate that the composition is sufficient to allow students to meet the expectations set forth in the program's mission and goals.

**Standard 4.2 The program makes reasonable adaptations in curriculum, policies, and procedures to accommodate differences among individual students**

**Requirement for Review:**

- The program must demonstrate that its language proficiency policy is applied consistently.

**Evidence of Concern:**

The CAA identified the consistent application of the program's language proficiency policy as an area of concern. In its accreditation application, the program reported that students must sign a declaration of acknowledgement that they have read the Essential Functions document, which describes the requirements for graduate students in communication sciences and disorders, and can perform these functions independently or with reasonable

accommodations. The program does not define the reasonable accommodations in the document or how the policy is consistently applied to all students.

**Steps to Be Taken:**

At the time of the next annual report, the program must provide evidence confirming that its language policy, in terms of reasonable accommodations necessary for performing the essential language functions reported in the Essential Functions document, are consistently applied.

## PERFORMANCE WITH RESPECT TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The CAA has evaluated this program regarding its performance with respect to student achievement and provides the following report, required as an accrediting agency recognized by the US Secretary of Education [[34 CFR 602.17\(f\)](#)].

### Comments/Observations:

<i>The CAA assessed the program's performance with respect to student achievement and found the program to meet or exceed the established CAA expectations (as described in accreditation standard 5.0-Assessment) in the following checked areas. Details regarding any of these areas found to be <u>not</u> in compliance are described earlier in this report in the context of the relevant standard.</i>	
X	Program Completion Rates
X	Praxis Examination Rates

## PROGRAM COMPLIANCE EXPECTATIONS

As an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, the CAA must comply with Criterion §602.20 [[34 CFR 602.20](#)]. This criterion requires that if an accrediting agency's review of a program indicates that the program is not in compliance with any standard, the CAA must provide a written timeline to the program to come into compliance that is reasonable, as determined by the CAA, based on the nature of the finding, the stated mission, and educational objectives of the program. The timeline may include intermediate checkpoints on the way to full compliance and must not exceed three years for programs, regardless of professional area. If the review of a second consecutive report reveals that issues continue for the same standard(s), regardless of which requirements for review were identified, and the program remains not in full compliance with all standards, the CAA may act to place the program on probation or withdraw its accreditation status in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in the [Accreditation Handbook](#). The CAA may place a program on probation or withdraw accreditation from a program prior to this time when there is clear evidence of circumstances that jeopardize the capability of the program to provide acceptable educational experiences for the students.

## PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THIS DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS

The CAA publishes a notice of final accreditation actions on its website after comprehensive reviews are completed in accordance with its published policies. In the event an adverse action is taken and becomes final (i.e., withdrawal or withholding of an accreditation status), the CAA is required to publish a brief statement summarizing the reasons for withholding or withdrawing the accreditation status of a program, together with the comments, if any, that the affected program may wish to make.

The Criteria for Recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education requires all recognized accrediting agencies to provide for the public correction of incorrect or misleading information an accredited or preaccredited program releases about accreditation or preaccreditation status, contents of site visit reports, and accrediting or preaccrediting actions with respect to the program. [[34 CFR 602.23\(d\)](#) and [602.23\(e\)](#)] The program must make accurate public disclosure of the accreditation or preaccreditation status awarded to the program, using the language provided in the [Accreditation Handbook](#) (see Chapter XII Informing the Public) on the academic accreditation website. If the program chooses to disclose any additional information within the scope of the ED rule, such disclosure also must be accurate. Any public disclosure of information within the scope of the rule must include the CAA's name, address, and telephone number as described in the [Accreditation Handbook](#). If an institution or program misrepresents or distorts any action by the CAA with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, its accreditation status, the contents of the site visit report, or final CAA accreditation

actions or decisions, the CAA will inform the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director that corrective action must be taken. If corrective action is not taken, the CAA will release a public statement that provides correct information and may invoke other sanctions as may be appropriate.