



School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Essential Functions of Candidates and Students in the Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Program

INTRODUCTION

Successful completion of the program requirements for the Master of Science degree in Speech-Language Pathology meets the academic and clinical requirements to prepare students for entry-level practice. Upon successful completion of a clinical fellowship (after graduation) graduates of the program will be eligible to apply for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology through the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

The education of speech-language pathologists requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in clinical practice.

The graduate program in speech-language pathology in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Pacific University adheres to the standards for accredited programs put forth by the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA). Operating within the scope of the CAA Standards, the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders has ultimate responsibility for (1) the selection of students, (2) the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum, (3) the evaluation of student progress, and (4) the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory academic achievements, but also on consistent demonstration of clinical skills and professionalism that are described as Essential Functions for the profession.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of Pacific University not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, religion or religious creed, disability, sex or gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, military, veteran or Vietnam Era status, or any other protected classification recognized by applicable law, in admission, access to, or treatment in employment, educational programs or activities as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or any other applicable state or federal law, or city ordinance.

Questions or complaints regarding University policy may be directed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, 2043 College Way, Forest Grove, OR 97116, (503) 352-2215.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS - PURPOSE

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) is a full-time, residential program. English is the language of instruction. The School of CSD has established academic standards and minimal essential functions consistent with those published by Schwartz et al (2007). The defined essential functions must be demonstrated by students with or without reasonable accommodations in order to complete the requirements of the program in preparation for entry-level practice as a speech-language pathologist in accordance with the expected knowledge and skill areas defined by the Council on Academic Programs (CAA) and the Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

Admission and retention decisions are based on continued satisfactory academic achievement coupled with satisfactory demonstration of clinical program requirements and consistent demonstration of the Essential Functions as described below. The School of CSD has a responsibility to the public to assure that graduates ultimately become highly competent speech-language pathologists, capable of delivering quality services, and upholding the well-being of the clients they serve. Therefore, we provide notification to candidates admitted to the program of the requirement to possess and demonstrate integrity, compassion, and humanitarian concern as well as the communication, motor, intellectual and cognitive, physical, sensory, professional and behavioral capacities necessary to practice speech-language pathology. These Essential Functions are required for program continuation and completion.

Failure to meet or maintain the Essential Functions may result in action, including supportive remediation, temporary leave of absence, suspension or dismissal from the program.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Support services and accommodations are available to students covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The university requires appropriate documentation of a disability or other covered condition in order to implement short- or long-term accommodations designed to allow students with disabilities access and opportunity to fulfill program and degree requirements.

It is the responsibility of each student requesting an accommodation to contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations (OAA) to initiate the required process and documentation. In consultation with the student, the OAA will recommend accommodations associated with specific courses and clinical practicum experiences. It is extremely important that students begin this process early so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to work proactively with OAA and faculty to develop strategies for accommodation. Students with accommodations should discuss clinical accommodations separately from accommodations recommended for academic coursework. Students with any accommodations should consult with OAA and with the Director of Clinical Education prior to accepting a clinical placement. Clinical sites make the final determination about whether a given accommodation is reasonable in that setting. If accommodations are put in place during a semester already in progress, the Director of Clinical Education or the student's clinical advisor will work with the site to put in place reasonable accommodations at the discretion of the site. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to provide access to the academic and clinical components of the program and to ensure that students are not denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination related to disability.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS – DEFINED

Essential functions can be described in relation to five areas: (a) communication, (b) motor, (c) intellectual/cognitive (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis), (d) sensory/observational, and (e) professional/behavioral/social, and the professional aspects of the performance of an SLP profession.

A. COMMUNICATION

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

1. Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language.
 - Students who do not speak English as their first language are required to demonstrate proficiency in oral and written language by earning the minimum required score on the International Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) according to the Pacific University published standards.
2. Read and write in English with competency sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
3. Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.
4. Modify communication style to meet the needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.
5. Communicate professionally and intelligibly with clients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
6. Communicate professionally and effectively in all written communication including email, client documentation, reports, scholarly papers required as a part of course work, and in all aspects of professional practice.
7. Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

B. MOTOR

A student must possess adequate gross and fine motor skills to:

1. Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities.
2. Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations such as fire, choking, or any other threats to client safety.
3. Access reliable transportation to attend on-campus academic classes and clinical placements as assigned.
4. Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.
5. Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of test protocols and consistent with best practice.
6. Manipulate client-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment such as AAC devices, hearing aids) in a safe and effective manner.
7. Access technology for academic coursework and clinical management (i.e. billing, documentation, therapy plans, data management, and other relevant clinical tasks).

C. INTELLECTUAL / COGNITIVE

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

1. Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands. Adequate skills in this area will be determined by review of the student's academic record as presented in their graduate application through academic transcripts, standardized test scores (where provided), letters of recommendation, and a written statement at the time of application and will be monitored through regular performance reviews in academic and clinical coursework throughout the program.
2. Planning, time-management, and organizational skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical

demands.

3. Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
4. Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation.
5. Self-evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skill to appropriate professional level and be able to identify and utilize resources in order to increase knowledge.
6. Use detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and dependent decisions.

D. SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL

A student must possess adequate vision, hearing, and tactile senses to:

1. Visually and auditorily identify typical and disordered speech, language (including social language and nonverbal communication), hearing, swallowing, and cognition through clinical and instrumental methods of assessment.
2. Identify and discriminate the phonetic and linguistic characteristics of a client's spoken responses.
3. Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
4. See, identify, and discriminate anatomic structures clinically and through instrumental measures and imaging studies.
5. Accurately monitor through both visual and auditory modalities, equipment displays and controls, including those of hearing instruments, used for assessment and treatment of patients.
6. Access written materials to allow reading of text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with academic book chapters, journal articles and other readings, and in program assessments including quizzes, exams, and the comprehensive exam. Access written materials associated with standardized assessment tools (protocols, manuals, psychometric validation materials) and instrumentation.
7. Recognize nonverbal communication when a client, client family, peer, supervisor, or other communication partner does or does not understand the clinician's written and/or verbal communication.

E. PROFESSIONAL/BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

1. Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships with fellow students, faculty and staff, supervisors, other professionals, and clients and their families including, but not limited to qualities such as compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
2. Recognize, show respect, and serve individuals with communication differences and disorders, individuals with any form of disability, and individuals of any age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, cultural, linguistic, and/or socioeconomic background.
3. Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics, university, and federal policies including confidentiality policies and maintain honesty and integrity in all academic and clinical work.
4. Disclose and accept responsibility for mistakes.
5. Maintain general good physical and mental health and self-care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and others in academic or clinical settings.
6. Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health).
7. Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional, and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.

8. Communicate, in a timely fashion, any issue or concern that pose any barrier or potential barrier to success in academic or clinical settings.
9. Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors.
10. Adhere to all expectations as described in the program handbook.

Acknowledgement of Receipt, Review, and Voluntary Agreement

As a graduate student in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Pacific University, my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the Essential Functions document in its entirety and that I understand I should consult with OAA, Student Support Services, and/or the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders with any questions I have about Essential Functions as they apply to me.

I agree that I am able to fulfill and am committed to the policies expressed in this document. I agree to inform my academic advisor and the Director of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders if I experience any change in capacity to fulfill these essential functions during the program. I understand the program will provide reasonable levels of support and reasonable accommodations in consultation with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations (OAA). I understand that failure to demonstrate or maintain each of these Essential Functions, with reasonable and appropriate accommodations where indicated, may result in a requirement for program remediation, modification of my plan of study including delays in program completion, a leave of absence, or a decision to recommend discontinuation of my enrollment as a student in the program.

Student's Name [Please Print]

Student's Signature

Date

The Essential Functions Policy is adapted from the Council of Academic Programs in Communicative Sciences and Disorders (2007). Eligibility Requirements and Essential Functions. Prepared by Schwartz et al., and retrieved from <http://www.capsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFChecklist.pdf>