



School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Essential Functions of Candidates for Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Program Admission and Continuance

INTRODUCTION

The Master of Science degree in Speech-Language Pathology meets the academic and clinical requirements to prepare 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 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 starred items (*), however, should be present when a student begins the program.

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 other academic and professional factors that each serve to ensure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the program required for program and degree completion.

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

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders has a responsibility to the public to assure that graduates become highly competent speech-language pathologists, capable of delivering quality services and preserving the well-being of the clients they serve. Thus, persons admitted, retained, and graduated are required to possess integrity, compassion, and humanitarian concern as well as the cognitive physical, sensory, ethical, professional, and behavioral capacities necessary to practice speech-language pathology.

Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory academic achievement but also on clinical program requirements for program and degree completion.

Failure to meet or maintain the Essential Functions may result in action, including dismissal from the program.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders 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. 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 accommodations for students toward successful completion of the program requirements.

It is the responsibility of each student requesting an accommodation to contact the Director of Learning Support Services (LSS) for Students with Disabilities to initiate the required process and documentation. The student will meet with a staff member from LSS and provide any requested documentation of the disability. In consultation with the student, the LSS 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 LSS, faculty, and clinical supervisors to develop strategies for accommodation. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to enable them to meet these standards and ensure that they are not denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination.

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.
 - Students will demonstrate oral language proficiency by passing an oral screening administered as part of the Clinic Orientation.
 - Students who do not pass the oral screening will be enrolled in a clinical program to improve oral proficiency.
2. Possess reading and writing skills 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 communication 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 on client documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
7. Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

B. MOTOR

A student must possess adequate 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 including fire, choking, or other threats to client safety.
3. Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.
4. Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.
5. Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
6. Manipulate client-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc) in a safe manner.
7. Access technology for 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, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, and a written statement
2. Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
3. Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation.
4. 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.
5. Utilize 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 normal and disordered speech, language (including social language), hearing, swallowing, and cognition through clinical and instrumental methods of assessment.
2. Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
3. Visualize and identify anatomic structures clinically and through instrumental measures.
4. Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
5. Identify and discriminate findings on imaging studies.
6. Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
7. Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and or verbal communication.
8. Identify and discriminate a client's spoken responses.
9. Accurately monitor through both visual and auditory modalities, equipment displays and controls, including those of hearing instruments, used for assessment and treatment of patients.

E. PROFESSIONAL/BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

1. Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
2. Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, genders, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics, university, and federal policies including confidentiality policies.
4. Maintain general good physical and mental health and self-care in order not to jeopardize the health

and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical setting.

5. Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health).
6. Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.
7. Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors.
8. Dress appropriately and professionally.

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 the Essential Functions document in its entirety; that I agree with its contents; that I am able to fulfill and am committed to the policies expressed therein; that I agree to inform my academic advisor and the Director of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders if I experience a change in capacity to fulfill these essential functions; that I understand the program will provide reasonable levels of support and reasonable accommodations in consultation with Learning Support Services, and I understand that failure to demonstrate or maintain each of these Essential Functions, with reasonable and appropriate accommodations where indicated, may result in a recommendation to discontinue 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.capcsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFChecklist.pdf>