

Essential Functions for Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Education

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OVERVIEW

Carlow University's Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology Program is committed to preparing clinicians with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to practice as evidence-based, ethical speech-language pathologists providing speech-language and swallowing services across a broad variety of clinical settings. Furthermore, the education of speech-language pathologists requires the synthesis and application of knowledge and the acquisition and development of clinical skills according to the standards set by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) and the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC). Speech-language pathology standards of practice require essential functions in the areas of communication, motor, intellectual/cognitive, sensory/observational, and behavioral/social abilities. Toward this end, it is important that students admitted, retained, and graduated possess the essential functions necessary to meet graduate and professional requirements as measured by state licensure and national certification. These five essential function domains of **(1) Communication, (2) Motor, (3) Intellectual/Cognitive, (4) Sensory/Observational, and (5) Behavioral/Social** are outlined in detail below.

Carlow University's Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology Program is committed to affording qualified students with disabilities the opportunity to take full advantage of its program. The University's Disabilities Services Office and Speech-Language Pathology Program will provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified and eligible students. A reasonable accommodation should not fundamentally alter the academic or clinical requirements of the Speech-Language Pathology Program, pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others, or present undue burden to the institution. Candidates for the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology are required to meet the essential functions set forth herein with or without reasonable accommodations for disabilities. Students who believe they have a disability for which they seek accommodation must contact the University's Disability Services Office. Accommodations will only be accorded through the Disability Services Office and are not retro-active. More information about Carlow University's Disabilities Services Office may be found at: <https://www.carlow.edu/student-life/student-services/disability-services/>.

COMMUNICATION

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, using effective communication skills that include accuracy, clarity, and proficiency in the English language
- Read, write, and comprehend proficiently to meet graduate-level curricular and clinical demands
- Elicit, interpret, and effectively apply verbal and nonverbal communications appropriate for culture and context, including facial expressions and body language, from clients, families, faculty, and classmates in clinical and academic settings
- Demonstrate sufficient verbal, nonverbal, and writing skills to appropriately model therapeutic targets and examples for clients, families, and relevant others including but not limited to providing accurate examples of articulatory targets, voice and resonance, English grammar and syntax, and fluency
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient/client documentation, reports, and scholarly papers as a part of course work and professional practice

MOTOR

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations including fire, choking, or other medical emergencies, and in the application of universal precautions
- Access transportation to and from classroom and clinical practicum/externship settings
- Efficiently manipulate and manage testing and treatment environments and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best practice guidelines
- Manipulate client/patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids etc.) in a safe manner
- Access technology for clinical and academic requirements (e.g. billing, medical charts, learning management systems etc.)

INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE

A student must possess adequate intellectual/cognitive skills to:

- Demonstrate cognitive learning including the ability to think logically, assess, problem solve, apply reasoning skills, and reach judgments in relation to new procedures through clinical application
- Cognitively comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands
- Accurately 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

- Seek relevant information, synthesize, and apply concepts and information from various sources and disciplines
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and dependent decisions

SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL

A student must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, tactile, and smell to:

- Visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered fluency, articulation, voice, resonance, respiration, characteristics, oral and written language in the area of semantics, pragmatics, syntax, morphology, and phonology, hearing, swallowing, cognition, and social interaction related to communication
- Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication
- Visualize and discriminate anatomic structures and imaging findings (e.g. MBSS, FEES etc.)
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests

BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Demonstrate an openness, acceptance, and respect of culture and diverse world views (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, social class).
- Demonstrate awareness of and responsiveness to ways in which culture impacts personal perspective, development, and interpersonal interactions.
- Demonstrate ability to effectively adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected events, and new situations
- Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics and University and federal privacy policies
- 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
- Maintain appropriate personal hygiene and dress appropriately and professionally for varied environments and settings
- Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints
- Accept appropriate suggestion and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors

Nothing contained herein is intended to conflict with the admission requirements, application process for the program may be found at www.carlow.edu/slp .

By signing this document, I certify that I have read and understand the “Essential Functions for Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Education” and believe to the best of my knowledge that I am able to meet each of these essential functions.

- Without accommodation** **With reasonable accommodation**

(If you have checked that you believe you will require a reasonable accommodation, by signing this document, you acknowledge and understand you must coordinate with the University’s Disability Services Office within sufficient time to ensure any accommodations can be arranged before the start of any term. Accommodations will only be accorded through the Disability Services Office and are not retro-active.)

Further, by signing this document, I understand that should I fail to meet and/or maintain the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation now or in the future, I will be denied permission to enroll in, continue or graduate from the program.

Printed Name

Signature of Applicant

Date

REFERENCES

1. Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2023).A guide for future practitioners in audiology and speech-language pathology: Core functions. Retrieved from: <https://growthzonesitesprod.azureedge.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/1023/2023/04/Core-Functions-for-AUD-and-SLP-Approved-4-3-23-rev-4-25-23.pdf>
2. Essential Functions for Professional Education University of Iowa Communication Sciences & Disorders. Retrieved from: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/comsci/sites/clas.uiowa.edu.comsci/files/Essential%20Functions-Student%20Signature.pdf>
3. Essential Functions of Speech and Hearing Sciences Education at James Madison University. Retrieved from: <https://www.csd.jmu.edu/documents/JMUEssentialFunctions.pdf>

4. Horner, J., Schwarz, I., Jackson, R., Johnstone, P., Mulligan, M., Roberts, K., Solberg, M. (2009). Developing an “essential functions” rubric: Purposes and applications for speech-language- hearing academic programs. *Journal of Allied Health*, 38(4), 242-247.
5. University of Pittsburgh Technical Standards: Graduate Clinical Program in Speech-Language Pathology (MA/MS SLP). Retrieved at:
<https://www.shrs.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/library/documents/csd/2017%20SLP%20Technical%20Standards.pdf>