

Essential Functions of Speech Language Pathology Admission, Retention, and Graduation Standards

INTRODUCTION

A graduate program in speech language pathology is recognized as a broad degree requiring the acquisition of academic knowledge and clinical skills in all applicable domains of speech, language, and hearing sciences. The education of SLPs requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment through patient care experience in preparation for the independent decision-making required in clinical practice.

POLICY

The MA/MS SLP program at Faulkner University adheres to the standards and guidelines of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (CAA) of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA). Within these guidelines, the program has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating its students; designing, implementing, and evaluating its curriculum; and determining who has earned the MA SLP or MS SLP degree. Further, the Department has a responsibility to the public that its graduates become fully competent and caring speech-language pathologists, capable of doing benefit and not harm. Thus, it is important that students admitted to our graduate programs possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice speech-language pathology. Therefore, admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory academic achievement, but also on the candidate's ability to conduct the essential functions necessary to achieve the knowledge and skills standards required for graduation and certification by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of speech language pathology to function in a broad variety of clinical situations, and to render a wide spectrum of competent patient care, individuals must have essential skills and attributes in five areas: communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, sensory-observational, and behavioral-social. These skills enable a student to meet graduate and professional requirements as measured by state and national credentialing agencies. Many of these skills can be learned and developed during the course of the graduate program through coursework and clinical experience. Failure to meet or maintain the Essential Functions may result in action against the student, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the program. **The starred items (*) are skills that are more inherent and should be present when a student begins the program.**

A. COMMUNICATION

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language.*
- Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.*
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.*
- Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.*
- Communicate professionally and intelligibly with patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
- Convey information accurately, appropriately and with cultural sensitivity.

B. MOTOR

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Perform and sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities.*
- Respond quickly and within protocol in emergency situations. *
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.*
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.*
- Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
- Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc) in a safe manner.
- Access technology for clinical management (i.e. billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.).

C. INTELLECTUAL / COGNITIVE

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate, deduce, and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.*
- Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
- Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation.
- 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.
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and independent decisions.

D. SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL

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

- Visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered communication (fluency, articulation, voice, resonance, respiration characteristics, oral and written language in the areas of semantics, pragmatics, syntax, morphology and phonology, hearing and balance disorders, swallowing cognition, social interaction related to communication).
- Identify the need for augmentative and alternative modalities of communication.
- Visualize and identify anatomic structures.
- Visualize and differentiate imaging findings.
- Identify and differentiate findings on imaging studies.
- Differentiate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
- Recognize and adjust when a client and/or client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and or verbal communication.
- Identify and differentiate a client's spoken responses.
- 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. BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Demonstrate mature, empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.*
- Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, genders, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.*
- Comply with applicable laws and conduct oneself in an ethical 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.*
- Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health).
- Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors.
- Dress appropriately and professionally, according to dress codes set forth by the University, Program, and any internship placements.

Faulkner University is committed to providing access and equal opportunity in its services, programs, activities and education for qualified individuals with a disability and will provide such students with academic adjustments and/or accommodations that are reasonable under the circumstances. (A "qualified individual with a disability" is one who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the program.) The Center for Disability Services serves as the central contact point for all students with disabilities at Faulkner University including Alabama Christian College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education, Harris College of Business, V. P. Black College of Biblical Studies, Jones School of Law, and all extended campuses. Students are responsible for informing the University of their need for services and accommodations. Contact The Center for Disability Services at [334-386-7185](tel:334-386-7185) or [1-800-879-9816](tel:1-800-879-9816) x7185, email hguy@faulkner.edu, or visit <http://www.faulkner.edu/undergrad/student-life/living-on-campus/student-services/project-key-for-disabilities/>.

By signing this, I certify that I have read and understand the “Essential Functions of Speech and Hearing Sciences Education”; agree with its contents; am committed to the policies expressed therein; possess the starred (*) items; and may be removed from the program should I fail to demonstrate all of the Essential Functions despite reasonable accommodations and reasonable levels of support from the faculty.

Printed Name

Signature

Date