



## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES

### ***Essential Skills and/or Ability***

Adapted from the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2007). [Eligibility Requirement and Essential Functions, CAPCSD](#)

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 patient care, individuals must have 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 licensure and national certification. Many of these skills can be learned and developed during the graduate program through coursework and clinical experience. The starred items (\*), however, are skills that are more inherent and should be present when a student begins the program.

These skills are essential for eligibility in the graduate program. This document will be reviewed with each student during orientation and again within the first 90 days (about 3 months) of enrollment, to verify the presence of each of the listed essential skills. If a student fails to exhibit these essential skills/abilities an Action Plan will be initiated to address these concerns and support the student. However, if a graduate candidate is unable to acquire the essential skills and ability with appropriate accommodations then the student may be dismissed from the graduate program.

#### **Communication**

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language (language to be determined by program). \*
- 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. \*

#### **Motor**

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain necessary physical activity levels in required classroom and clinical activities. \*
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations (e.g., fire, choking). \*
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements. \*
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday. \*

#### **Intellectual/Cognitive**

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate, and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands. \*

### **Behavioral/Social**

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature, empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others. \*
- Not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. \*
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics along with university and federal privacy policies. \*
- Maintain general good physical, mental health, and self-care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical setting. \*

### **The following skills should be developed as you progress through the graduate program.**

#### **Communication**

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate professionally and intelligibly with clients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on client documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as part of coursework and professional practice.
- Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

#### **Motor**

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Efficiently structure testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
- Manipulate client-utilized equipment (e.g., durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids) in a safe manner.
- Access technology for clinical management (e.g., billing, charting, therapy programs).

#### **Intellectual/Cognitive**

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Identify significant findings from client history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
- Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in client assessment, diagnosis, and therapeutic planning 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 to increase knowledge.

#### **Sensory/Observational**

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

- Visually and auditorily identify typical and disordered communication (i.e., 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, and social interaction related to communication).

- Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
- Visually identify anatomic structures.
- Identify and discriminate findings on imaging studies.
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
- Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and/or verbal communication.

### **Behavioral/Social**

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Adapt to changing and demanding environments, while maintaining 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 conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics and university and federal privacy policies.
- Perform all duties and conduct her/himself in a socially responsive and non-discriminatory manner that is culturally sensitive and responsive.

*Reference: CAPCSD Committee on Essential Functions. (2007, April). Essential functions of speech-language pathologists and audiologists. White Paper presented at the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, Palm Springs, CA.*

*Adapted from Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) Committee on Essential Functions. (Updated August 2021).*

***\*Progress on the essential skills and/or abilities will be reviewed at the end of the first semester in the program with the student. Further reviews will be completed on an as needed basis.***