

Essential Functions Document
Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology
University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire
Adopted: Spring 2014

In addition to the knowledge and skills outlined in standards held in regard by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, a distinct set of attributes and functions must be possessed by individuals seeking the master's degree in SLHS. These "essential functions" allow the degree-seeking candidate to be poised to meet the professional obligations of the wide range of settings and clientele of the speech-language pathologist.

Some of these items are inherent, while others are practiced and solidified during graduate training.

Regardless, all candidates seeking the master's degree must demonstrate all stated essential functions during the training program and prior to graduation.

COMMUNICATION

- Communication skills include articulation, fluency, expressive/receptive language, pragmatics, and voice/resonance.
- The student must demonstrate consistent communication skills to:
 - Read and write with standard American English to complete all functions of clinical and academic graduate program requirements.
 - Use spoken standard American English to complete all oral functions of the clinical and academic program requirements.
 - Understand and use nonverbal communication skills effectively.
 - Modify communication style to be matched to the context with clients, caregivers, and others.

INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE

- The student must demonstrate cognitive functioning that allows him/her to:
 - Understand, retain, integrate, and apply oral and written content to complete all functions of the clinical and academic graduate program requirements.
 - Self-assess, set goals based on past performance, and use resources to increase knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
 - Organize, strategize, and adjust problem-solving and decision-making skills to be successful in coursework and clinical contexts.

PHYSICAL

- The student must possess motor skills and functioning that allows him/her to:
 - Sustain the necessary level of physical exertion matched to classroom and clinical tasks across the duration of the mandated workday.

- Respond in an expedited manner to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations (e.g., fire alarm evacuation, dealing with a choking child, etc.).
- Manipulate testing and treatment materials efficiently and without disruption to the assessment and treatment contexts.
- Interact with client-utilized materials and equipment (e.g., hearing aids, wheelchair, AAC device, etc.) without complication or error.
- Access technology for mandated client activities (e.g., online billing, charting systems, EMR programs, etc.).
- Access transportation to clinical and academic settings necessary for program requirements.

SENSORY

- The student must possess sensory skills that allows him/her to:
 - Visually discriminate effectively between normal and disordered or different communication (i.e., fluency, articulation, voice/resonance, language, cognition, and hearing) and swallowing skills.
 - Auditorily discriminate effectively between normal and disordered or different communication (i.e., fluency, articulation, voice/resonance, language, cognition, and hearing) and swallowing skills.
 - Identify and discriminate anatomical and physiological structures and functions on structures and from imaging sources to make necessary clinical judgments and recommendations.

BEHAVIORAL

- The student must possess behavioral skills that allows him/her to:
 - Wear attire that is appropriately matched to the professional context.
 - Receive and implement constructive criticism in academic and clinical activities.
 - Adapt to quickly changing and intense professional environments.
 - Uphold the ASHA Code of Ethics and all university, institution, state, and federal privacy and legal regulations.
 - Show compassion, empathy, and respect to clients, caregivers, and colleagues.
 - Practice self-care to maintain a level of functioning and performance that does not jeopardize clients and colleagues.