

**Essential Functions Policy, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

To be considered for advancement in the graduate training program, candidates for the M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology must demonstrate motivation, maturity, stability, sound judgment, a sense of responsibility, and good moral character; they must demonstrate cognitive, motor and organizational skills, sensory perception, and ability to synthesize and apply knowledge; and they must possess such other attributes as the faculty deems to be essential to become a caring and effective speech-language pathologist. The Department Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran status. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with properly certified disabilities. The CSD Department's faculty has responsibility for the welfare of students in the Department. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Department has established academic standards and minimum essential requirements that must be met with or without reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the program and graduate. Students must meet these essential functions in order to be retained in the program. Reasonable accommodations will be considered on an individual basis. In such cases, the Office of Disability Services will coordinate documentation and evaluation of a student who could meet the program's essential functions with accommodation(s). In the event that a student is unable to meet these essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodations, the student will not be allowed to remain enrolled in or to graduate from the program.

Essential Functions of Master's Degree Students in Speech-Language Pathology

Motor Skills

The student should have sufficient motor function so that he/she is able to execute movements required to provide with acuity, accuracy, and facility, a complete speech, language, and/or audiological examination and provide therapeutic services to patients of all ages and both genders in all clinical situations. The student must have the ability to safely assist patients in moving, for example, from room to room, from chair to chair, on and off examination table.

Sensory/Observation

The CSD curriculum requires essential abilities in information acquisition. The student must have the ability to master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, written materials, and projected images. The student must also be able to acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the clinical training portion of the program. He or she must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communication and manual signs when performing clinical assessments and treatment activities. The student must have the ability to take a case history and perform a visual examination of various oral and craniofacial structures (i.e. ear, throat, oral cavity, skull, etc). The student must have sufficient sensory capability to perform all required examination and treatment protocols using instruments and tools necessary for accurate, efficient, and timely completion of such activities.

Communication

The student must be able to accurately, effectively, and sensitively communicate information on patient status with other students, faculty, staff, patients, families, and other professionals. This information must be communicated in a succinct yet comprehensive manner and in settings in which time available may be limited. These skills require the ability to assess and effectively communicate all relevant information including the significance of non-verbal responses. These skills also require the ability to immediately assess incoming information to allow for appropriate, well-focused follow-up inquiry. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences. He or she must express his or her ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.

Cognitive

The student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty and professional staff. These skills may be described as the ability to comprehend, memorize, analyze, and synthesize material. He/she must be able to develop reasoning and decision making skills appropriate to the practice of speech language pathology and/or audiology.

Behavioral/Emotional

The student must possess the emotional health required for the full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and treatment of communication disorders in patients. In addition, he or she must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all conditions including highly stressful situations. The student must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways. The student must be able to experience empathy for the situations and circumstances of others and effectively communicate that empathy. The student must know if his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and/or experiences affect his or her perceptions and relationships with others. The student must be willing and able to examine and change his or her behavior when it interferes with productive individual or team relationships. The student must possess skills and experience necessary for effective and harmonious relationships in diverse learning and working environments.

Professional

The student must possess the ability to reason judiciously and practice speech-language pathology and/or audiology in an ethical manner. Students must be willing to learn and abide by professional standards of practice. He or she must possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. The student must be able to engage in patient care delivery in all clinical settings and be able to deliver care to all patient populations including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults.