

Essential Functions in Speech-Language Pathology

The M.S., SLP degree program requires the student to engage in diverse, complex, and specific experiences essential to the acquisition and practice of speech-language pathology. Unique combinations of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, physical, and social abilities are required to satisfactorily perform these functions. In addition to being essential for the completion of the requirements for the M.S. SLP degree, these functions are necessary to ensure the health and safety of patients/clients, fellow candidates, faculty, and other providers.

The essential functions required for successful admissions and continuance by candidates for the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology program at The University of Scranton include but are not limited to the following abilities:

Essential Function Domain 1 - Communication

A student must possess adequate communication skills (with or without accommodations) to:

- Communicate proficiently in both oral and written or other forms of communication in English.
- 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 with relevance and cultural sensitivity.
- Express ideas clearly and freely, including giving and receiving feedback.
- Complete reading assignments, writing assignments, search and evaluate the literature, and maintain written records in a timely manner.

Essential Function Domain 2 - Motor

A student must possess adequate motor skills (with or without accommodations) to:

- Sustain the necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities.
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations (e.g., fire, choking, CPR)
- 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 protocols and with best therapeutic practice.
- Manipulate patient equipment (e.g., durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids) in a safe manner.
- Access and use technology for education and clinical management (e.g., distance learning courses, billing, charting, therapy programs).
- Elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, and other evaluative procedures.

- Demonstrate adequate gross and fine motor movements, balance, manual dexterity, and kinesthetic awareness to safely perform speech-language pathology procedures.

Essential Function Domain 3 – Intellectual / Cognitive

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills (with or without accommodations) to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate, and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands at a level deemed appropriate by the CSD profession.
- 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 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 use resources to increase knowledge.
- Use detailed written and verbal instruction to make unique and independent decisions.
- Use sound judgment, prioritize therapeutic interventions, and measure and record outcomes.
- Use the computer for searching, recording, storing, and retrieving information.

Essential Function Domain 4 – Sensory / Observational

A student must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, tactile and smell (with or without accommodations) to:

- Visually and auditorily identify typical and atypical 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 augmentative and alternative modalities of communication.
- Visualize and discriminate anatomic structures and imaging findings (e.g., MBSS, FEES).
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests (e.g., acoustic and aerodynamic analysis).
- Recognize when a client and/or client's caregiver(s) does or does not understand the clinician's written and/or verbal communication.

Essential Function Domain 5 – Behavioral / Professional / Social

A student must possess adequate behavioral, professional, and social attributes (with or without accommodations) to:

- Display mature empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, collaboration, responsibility, 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Engage in patient care in all clinical settings.
- Deliver care to all client/patient populations.

If a student requires assistance to demonstrate any of the above stated skills and abilities, it is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). The University and the Department of Health and Human Performance will provide reasonable accommodation as long as it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered or impose an undue hardship such as those which cause a significant expense, difficulty, or are unduly disruptive to the educational process.