

Essential Functions and Technical Standards for Admission and Continued Enrollment

The essential functions and technical standards for admission to and continued enrollment in the Communication Disorders (COMD) program reflect the essential qualities and abilities that are considered necessary to a student's academic and clinical performance and success as an independent practitioner upon graduation. Ability to meet these Technical Standards is required for admission and must also be maintained throughout a student's progress in the major. In the event that, a student is unable to fulfill these essential functions and technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, then the student may be dismissed from the program. Students should carefully review the essential functions and technical standards below to determine whether or not they can meet these standards with or without accommodation.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

To be successful in the COMD Program, a student must consistently:

1. Utilize appropriate and effective spoken, written, and nonverbal communication with clients and colleagues from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Students must learn complex information, perform clinical problem solving, and synthesize and apply information to formulate diagnostic and treatment judgments.
2. Demonstrate sufficient motor, sensory, memory, and coordination skills to perform client service delivery within the scope of speech-language pathology practice.
3. Maintain composure and continue to function well during periods of high stress.
4. Demonstrate affective skills and appropriate demeanor and rapport with clients, caregivers, and professional colleagues.
5. Adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in an academic or clinical environment.
6. Reliably and critically self evaluate his/her professional-technical and personal skills that contribute to positive client outcomes.
7. Accept constructive criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

To be successful in the COMD Program, an individual must possess specific skills and abilities with respect to Observation Skills/Sensory Abilities, Communication Skills, Psychomotor Skills, Cognitive Skills, and Affective/Interpersonal Skills. The Technical Standards described below must be met throughout the COMD program. If issues arise, the faculty will bring their concerns to the student's attention and to the Program Head. The Program Head is responsible for investigating the issue. Subsequent to investigation, the Program Head will send a letter to the student, describing the concern(s) and necessary change(s) to resolve the issue. Specific examples, in which the student's limitations interfered with the academic and/or clinical performance, will be provided.

Resources may be suggested to the student for appropriate intervention. A meeting with the Program Head, the Director of Clinical Education, and Advisor to discuss the content of the letter is strongly encouraged. Pending the outcome of the meeting, the student's progress will be monitored to ensure resolution. Upon recommendation of the faculty and with approval of the Program Head, if the issue(s) is not resolved satisfactorily in a timely manner, a second warning may occur or the student may be denied permission to continue in the COMD program.

1. Observation Skills/Sensory Abilities: Minimum skillset necessary to provide safe and effective patient care, and ensure a safe environment.

- Visualize and identify anatomical structures and interpret results from video imaging.
- Visualize and identify text, numbers, images, tables and graphs associated with complex electronic instrumentation, and written information
- Observe, interpret, score, and document clients' activity accurately during diagnostic and treatment procedures, including those requiring auditory perception.
- Read, comprehend, and interpret information accurately from diagnostic tests, equipment, and client records. Provide complete documentation in a timely manner.

2. Communication Skills: The ability to communicate in a manner that demonstrates understanding and responsiveness to others' concerns, motivation, feelings and behaviors.

- Communicate effectively and appropriately with patients, faculty, staff, peers, and other health care professionals in spoken, written and non-verbal forms.
- Understand and speak the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.
- Modify communication style to meet diverse communicative needs.
- Demonstrate non-verbal communication appropriate for culture sensitivity and situation.
- Make a spoken case for a course of action when offering professional advice; recognize potential communication barriers and adjust approach or clarify information as needed.
- Collaborate with clients regarding clinical recommendations; provide empathy for those suffering anxiety, and put clients at ease in stressful situations.
- Proofread and edit own documentation. Communicate accurately, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers.

3. Psychomotor Skills

- Attend and participate in lecture and laboratory classes.
- Attend and participate in clinical rotations on-site and in assigned locations.

- Accomplish required tasks in clinical and academic settings.
- Manipulate laboratory, evaluation and intervention materials, including completion of all academic and client-related forms and paperwork (e.g. lesson plans, data collection forms, SOAP notes, reports).
- Sustain the physical health and stamina to complete the program in speech-language pathology.
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for patients in emergency situations.
- Meet the physical demands of practice across clinical settings, which may include holding infants, picking up and/or carrying small children, assisting ambulatory patients in walking, pushing a wheelchair and assistance/transfer as needed.
- Be physically capable of performing CPR.

4. Cognitive Skills

- Comprehend, integrate, and synthesize a large body of information and knowledge to analyze complex client problems.
- Self-assess clinical and academic performance and reflect on performance accurately.
- Self-evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skills; identify and utilize resources in order to successfully change, improve, and increase one's knowledge and abilities.
- Set goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engage in reflective practice for improvement; solicit and respond appropriately to feedback.
- Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete academic or clinical activities.
- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, judge, and synthesize as needed in the academic and clinical arenas.
- Use logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems prior to choice.
- Recognize potentially hazardous materials, equipment and situations and proceed in a manner to minimize risk of injury to those in the area.

5. Affective/Behavioral Skills

- Demonstrate appreciation and respect for individual, social, and cultural differences in fellow students, colleagues, staff, clients, and significant others.
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviors, emotional stability, and attitudes to protect the safety and well-being of clients and classmates.
- Demonstrate empathy and demonstrate commitment to the role of the Speech Language Pathologist.
- Appropriately handle situations that may be emotionally, physically, or intellectually stressful.

- Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in academic and clinical situations.
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and professionalism.
- Maintain confidentiality of client/patient information.
- Dress appropriately and professionally.
- Recognize the changing levels/roles of supervision as competence grows or settings change.
- Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.
- Accept constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors.
- Adhere to the Code of Ethics of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and other relevant professional standards.
- Develop and maintain a network of contacts, both inside and outside the field of speech-language pathology.
- Ability to adapt your approach in a variety of situations, and work effectively with a wide cross-section of the community representing diverse backgrounds, cultures and socio-economic circumstances.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law enacted in 1974 to protect the privacy of student education records. The law applies to those institutions that regularly receive federal funding from the Department of Education and is enforced by the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education. To understand FERPA rights and protections, please see:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/registrar/legislative-policies/ferpa/>

FERPA laws require faculty obtain written permission to release information about your academic records.

If you encounter protected educational records, it is your duty to report the disclosure, and you are required to protect the confidentiality of that information by not sharing it with anyone who is not authorized to access that information.