

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION

The Speech Language Pathology program at Western Carolina University (WCU) is designed to prepare graduates for clinical careers as speech language pathologists through rigorous academic training and intense clinical preparation. The requirements for graduation meet or exceed the standards set forth by the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA), which is the accrediting agency for both the academic and clinical components of the program. The technical standards set forth by the Speech Language Pathology program establish the essential qualities that each graduate of the program must possess, and are necessary for ASHA certification and success as a speech-language pathologist. All students admitted into the Speech- language Pathology program must meet the following essential qualities.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

To be successful in the graduate speech-language pathology program and ultimately to perform the role of the speech language pathologist 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 have the cognitive ability to learn complex information, be able to perform clinical problem solving, and synthesize and apply information from the discipline of Human Communication Sciences and Disorders and related disciplines to formulate diagnostic and treatment judgments.
2. Possess sufficient motor, sensory, memory, and coordination abilities to perform routine client/patient care in speech-language pathology.
3. Have the capacity to maintain composure and emotional stability during periods of high stress.
4. Demonstrate affective skills and appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality client/patient care.
5. Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in an academic or clinical environment.
6. Have the ability to reliably and critically self evaluate their professional-technical and personal skills that contribute to positive client outcomes.
7. Have the ability to accept constructive criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

The technical standards for admission to and continued enrollment in the Speech Language Pathology program reflect the essential qualities and abilities that are considered necessary to a student's academic and clinical performance. Ability to meet these Technical Standards is required for admission and also must be maintained through out a student's progress in the Speech Language Pathology program. In the event that, during education, a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, then the student may be asked to leave the program. Students should carefully review the "technical standards" below to determine if assistance is needed to perform any of the required tasks.

To perform the essential functions of a speech-language pathologist and be successful in the Speech-Language Pathology program, an individual must possess specific skills and abilities in the following four areas:

1. Observation Skills
2. Psychomotor Skills
3. Cognitive Abilities
4. Affective/Behavioral Skills

1. Observation Skills

- Observe, interpret, and document client's/patients' activity and behavior accurately during assessment and treatment procedures.
- Accurately monitor through both visual and auditory modalities, equipment displays and controls used for assessment and treatment of patients.

2. Psychomotor Skills

- Attend and participate in lecture and laboratory classes, and access laboratories, classrooms, and work stations.
- Attend and participate in clinical internships/externships in assigned locations.
- Accomplish required tasks in clinical and academic settings.
- Have the fine motor coordination to accurately and efficiently use equipment and materials during assessment and treatment of clients/patients.

3. Cognitive Abilities

- Comprehend, integrate, and synthesize a large body of information/knowledge in a short period of time.
- Analyze complex client/patient problems.
- Reflect on clinical and academic performance and self assess performance accurately.
- Utilize appropriate and effective spoken, written and non-verbal communication. Students must be able to understand and speak the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice by graduation.

4. Affective/Behavioral Skills

- Demonstrate appreciation and respect for individual, social, and cultural differences in fellow students, colleagues, staff, clients/patients, and significant others.
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviors, emotional stability, and attitudes to protect the safety and well being of clients/patients and classmates.
- Possess and demonstrate empathy, and demonstrate commitment to the role of the Speech-Language Pathologist.
- Demonstrate ability to 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.

Candidates for admission to the Master's Degree Program in Speech-Language Pathology who have been accepted for admission will be required to verify they understand and meet these technical standards. Admission decisions are made on the assumption that each candidate can meet the technical standards without consideration of disability.

Letters of admission will be offered contingent on either a signed statement from the applicant that she/he can meet the program's technical standards without accommodation, or a signed statement from the applicant that she/he believes she/he can meet the technical standards if reasonable accommodation is provided.

The WCU Student Disabilities Services office will evaluate a student who states she/he could meet the program's technical standards with accommodation and confirm that the stated condition qualifies as a disability under applicable laws.

If an applicant states she/he can meet the technical standards with accommodation, then the University will determine whether it agrees that the student can meet the technical standards with reasonable accommodation; this includes a review of whether the accommodations requested are reasonable, taking into account whether the accommodation would jeopardize client/patient safety, or the educational process of the student or the institution, including all coursework and internships deemed essential to graduation.

WCU Disabilities Services, the Speech-Language pathology program, and the student will jointly decide what accommodations are suitable, possible in terms of reasonable accommodation, and will render the person capable of performing all essential functions established by the program.

I certify that I have read and understand the technical standards of admission listed above and that I believe to the best of my knowledge that I meet each of these standards without accommodation. I understand that if I am unable to meet these standards it may void admission or result in dismissal from the program.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Alternative statement for students requesting accommodations.

I certify that I have read and understand the technical standards of admission listed above and that I believe to the best of my knowledge that I can meet each of these standards with certain accommodations. I will contact the WCU Student Disabilities Office to determine what accommodations may be available. I understand that if I am unable to meet these standards with or without accommodations, it may void admission or result in dismissal from the program.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Additional Information regarding the graduate speech language pathology program at Western Carolina University:

- 1) Not all students will receive all types of sites (i.e., hospital, skilled nursing facility, private practice)
- 2) Clinic placements are based on experience needs and prior semester evaluations
- 3) Travel to clinic placements may require up to 2 hours travel
- 4) Clinic placements are Monday, Wednesday and Friday during fall and spring semesters and Monday through Friday during summer semesters unless otherwise decided by the clinical preceptor and clinic director/placement coordinator
- 5) The course sequence is to be followed as is deemed appropriate when accepted to the program (i.e., a student who is admitted as a leveling student should follow the leveling course sequence)

Signature

Date

Printed Name