Essential Functions in Communication Disorders and Sciences’ Master’s Degree Program; State University of New York College at Plattsburgh

Essential functions are those skills and traits that are important for success in a particular academic degree program. These essential functions, delineated below, help ensure that graduate students in Communication Disorders and Science will succeed in the classroom and in clinical practice necessary for the Master’s degree and for safe and effective patient care.

With reasonable accommodations as needed, students should:

COMMUNICATION

- Communicate proficiently, professionally, and intelligibly in both oral and written English;
- Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands;
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication for culture and context;
- Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served;
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.

MOTOR ABILITY AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities;
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations including fire, choking, etc.;
- Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice;
- Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc) in a safe and effective manner. While not all clients in all settings will require this, in some clinical environments this is considered an essential skill;
• Access technology for clinical management (i.e. billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.);

• Provide for one’s own personal hygiene;

• Maintain adequate physical health to complete academic and clinical requirements and in order to not put at risk clients and others in the work/academic environment.

INTELLECTUAL / COGNITIVE

• Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands;

• 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 plan 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 utilize resources in order to increase knowledge;

• Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and independent decisions;

• Retain information across time;

• Apply academic information in clinical contexts;

• Critically evaluate information.

SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL

• Visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered communication, fluency, swallowing, articulation, voice, resonance, respiration characteristics, oral and written language in the areas of semantics, pragmatics, syntax, morphology and phonology, hearing and balance disorders, swallowing, cognition, social interaction related to communication;

• Demonstrate sufficient sensory ability to:
- sufficiently assess speech-related structures and functions and communication; maintain and use technology related to communication assessment and therapy;

- acquire knowledge and skills required by the program; counsel, assess, and treat individuals with communication disorders;

- recognize and respond appropriately to emergencies that potentially affect clients and others (e.g., know when there is a fire alarm and safely evacuate self and client);

- discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests;

- recognize when a client or client’s family does not understand the clinician’s written or verbal communication.

**BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL**

A student should possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others;

- Work in a collegial and effective manner with peers and supervisors;

- 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 departmental, 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;

- Present one’s self in a professional manner in clinical and academic contexts;
• Abide by the university’s academic honesty policy.

**Students with Disabilities.**
If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to register with Student Support Services — Angell College Center prior to requesting accommodations. Student Support Services will assist in determining the level or type of support that is needed for you to fulfill the essential functions of your graduate program. For more information about Student Services, or to find out if you qualify, please contact:

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**References:**
