



MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Human Services

Speech-Language Pathology

Essential Skills Communications Disorders Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology

The practice of speech-language pathology requires knowledge and skills to function in a broad range of clinical situations with a wide range of patient needs. In addition to the academic requirements, applicants for degrees in Speech-Language Pathology must possess and be able to demonstrate the skills and dispositions set forth below. The following *Essential Skills* are academic and clinical skills that a student will be asked to perform during graduate school. These *Essential Skills* are necessary for a student to meet the professional requirements required for state licensure and national certification as a speech-language pathologist. The communication, intellectual, sensory-observation, behavioral-social and motor skills presented in this document are consistent with those skills and dispositions found in the many practice-specific documents produced by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association.

Many of the specific skills listed below will be introduced and developed during your educational career; however, students need to have the ability to acquire them. The starred items (*) are skills that are more inherent and should be present when a student applies for the graduate program.

Murray State University promotes diversity and supports efforts to reduce barriers. If after reading this document you become aware that you may need accommodations to perform the skills and dispositions below, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Student Disabilities Services (“OSDS”). A student (or prospective student) is not obligated to request an accommodation or disclose a disability. However, if reasonable accommodation(s) are needed, he or she should contact the OSDS. If a student chooses not to request reasonable accommodation(s), no accommodation will be provided in the academic or clinical setting. Whether or not a requested accommodation is reasonable is determined by the OSDS and guided by applicable law. Students will be responsible for providing the appropriate documentation regarding reasonable accommodations granted by the OSDS to the Communication Disorders program.

Communication

The student must:

1. Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English to achieve effective clinical and professional interactions with patients, faculty, staff, peers, and other health care professionals.*
2. Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands (e.g., write and understand discipline-specific papers and clinical reports) in English. *
3. Provide intelligible and accurate models of American English, including all English phonemes.*

4. Communicate in a succinct yet comprehensive manner in settings in which time may be limited.
5. Assess and effectively communicate all relevant information, including the significance of non-verbal responses.
6. Establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences. *
7. Express his or her ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback. *
8. Accurately perceive and appropriately use non-verbal communication*
9. Accurately model voice, articulation, and language skills needed for effective prevention, assessment and treatment. *
10. Follow detailed written and verbal instructions. *

Intellectual Skills

The student must:

1. Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands. *
2. Solve clinical problems through critical analysis.
3. Seek relevant case information, synthesize, and apply concepts and information from various sources and disciplines.
4. Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plans and implementation.
5. Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete academic and clinical activities, which typically occur in blocks of time lasting up to four hours with one or two short breaks.*
6. Schedule and prioritize activities, and provide documentation in a timely manner.
7. Comply with administrative, legal, and regulatory policies. *
8. Assess incoming information to allow for appropriate, well-focused follow-up inquiry.

Sensory-Observation Abilities

The student must:

1. Visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered communication. (i.e., fluency, articulation, voice, resonance, oral and written language, cognition, hearing, social interactions, respiration characteristics, and swallowing) including underlying structures and functions.
2. Have the ability to master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, written materials, and projected images.
3. Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
4. Acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the clinical training portion of the program.
5. 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, treatment activities or patient education.
6. Take a case history and perform a visual examination of various oral and cranio-facial structures (i.e. ear, throat, oral cavity, skull, etc.).

7. Perform required examination and treatment protocols using instruments and tools necessary for accurate, efficient, and timely completion of such activities.
8. Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
9. Visually monitor client behaviors, responses and materials.
10. Make accurate judgments about speech and/or acoustic signals.

Behavior-Social Qualities

The student must:

1. Uphold the Code of Ethics of the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the Code of Academic Conduct of Murray State University. *
2. Possess emotional health sufficient to carry out the tasks above, have good judgment, and behave in a professional, reliable, mature, and responsible manner.*
3. Manage the use of time and be able to systematize actions in order to complete professional and technical tasks with realistic constraints.
4. Adapt, possessing sufficient flexibility to function in new and stressful environments.*
5. Evaluate her/his own performance, be forthright about errors, accept constructive criticism, and look for ways to improve academic and clinical performance.*
6. Exhibit professional behavior by conforming to appropriate standards of dress, appearance, language, and public behavior as outlined in the program's clinic and academic handbooks.*
7. Display mature, empathic and effective relationships with clients, faculty and staff while maintaining professional boundaries.*
8. Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, genders, race, religions, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic backgrounds.*
9. Maintain general good health and self-care in order not to jeopardize health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings.*

Motor Skills

The student must:

1. Sustain necessary physical activity level in required clinical and classroom activities (e.g., class presentations, projects, 60- minute clinical sessions including organization and clean-up of materials and treatment room across settings).*
2. Have sufficient use of motor skills to carry out necessary clinical procedures, both those involved in learning the fundamental sciences and those required in the clinical environment.*
3. Administer and complete protocols designed to ensure patient safety (e.g., behavior plans, universal precautions, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, Heimlich, fire drills etc.).
4. Respond quickly as appropriate to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations, including fire, choking, etc.*
5. Access technology for clinical management that is in compliance with HIPAA guidelines (i.e., billing, clinical documentation, laboratory exercises).*
6. Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g., durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, wheelchairs, laboratory exercises etc.) in a safe and effective manner.
7. Access transportation to all clinical and academic placements.*
8. Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violating testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.*

9. Participate in academic and clinical activities or other professional, which typically occur in blocks of time lasting up to four hours with one or two short breaks.*

Each student must continue to meet all of the Essential Skills set forth above with or without reasonable accommodation(s). A student may be denied permission to continue in the undergraduate program or the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology at Murray State University should the student fail at any time to demonstrate all of the required Essential Skills.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IN ADDITION TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ACADEMIC COURSE WORK, I MUST ALSO DEMONSTRATE SKILLS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CURRENT STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION AND THAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS MUST BE VERIFIED BY THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR AS PART OF MY APPLICATION FOR CLINICAL CERTIFICATION IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY. I FURTHER UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FAILURE TO DEMONSTRATE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CURRENT STANDARDS IN A CLINICAL SETTING WILL PRECLUDE ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (please print): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Submission of a signed Graduate program application indicates that a student has read and understood that the ability to perform the above **Essential Skills** (posted online) with or without reasonable accommodation(s) is **required** for successful completion of the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology degree and professional certification and practice as a Speech-Language Pathologist. Furthermore, my submission herein indicates that I understand that I may request reasonable accommodation(s) if I believe such is needed.