

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS ADVISING HANDOUT
FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROGRAM
MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MOORHEAD
DECEMBER 2018

The accredited graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) of the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) at Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) adheres to both and certification standards set forth by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Essential Functions refer to those communication and social attributes, cognitive abilities, behavioral attributes, and physical abilities that are necessary for entry-level practice as a speech-language pathologist. This document was developed as a preliminary step in considering adopting an essential functions policy in the program. This document serves as an informal advising handout at this time.

If you are uncertain about your abilities to demonstrate any or all of these Essential Functions, please feel free to consult Graduate Coordinator to discuss your situation.

The Essential Functions important for students in the SLP program at MSUM are as follows:

COMMUNICATION

- Possess adequate communication abilities (articulation, fluency, receptive and expressive language, voice and resonance).
- Communicate professionally and effectively with people in person, by phone, and in writing. This includes email, text, or other forms of electronic communication.
- Consider the communication needs and cultural values of others.
- Demonstrate effective clinical and professional interaction with clients and relevant others.
- Model target phonemes, grammatical features, or other aspects of speech or language necessary to treat clients.
- Write comprehensive academic, research and clinical documents.
- Demonstrate sufficient mastery of English to communicate effectively in oral and written forms, to model effective communication for clients, and to progress satisfactorily through the SLP curriculum.

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

- Develop and maintain appropriate relationships with clients and professional colleagues.
- Demonstrate pragmatic abilities, such as appropriate eye contact and turn taking in communicative interactions.
- Comprehend and use nonverbal communication, including messages encoded via facial expression, vocal intonation, proximity, or body language.

COGNITIVE ABILITIES

- Demonstrate the capacity to learn and assimilate information, including comprehension of research and clinical reports.
- Demonstrate effective problem solving skills.
- Synthesize and apply information from various sources and disciplines.
- Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete clinical and academic requirements.
- Self-monitor performance of academic, clinical and research tasks and adjust approach to tasks as necessary.

BEHAVIORAL ATTRIBUTES

- Maintain appropriate professional behavior.
- Treat all persons with respect, including those with cultural and personal differences.
- Manage emotional, mental and physical health to perform the duties of your job.
- Maintain composure and emotional stability in demanding situations.
- Adapt to changing environments and situations.
- Understand and respect authority.
- Demonstrate regular attendance.
- Collaborate as necessary with other professionals.
- Comply with administrative, legal, and regulatory policies.
- Complete job requirements in a timely fashion.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES

- Maintain physical health and stamina to participate in professional activities for up to four-hour blocks of time given one or two breaks.
- Move independently to, from, and within work, academic and clinical settings.
- Manipulate educational or clinical tools necessary to perform all duties in a safe and effective manner.
- Demonstrate physical abilities to work with others, including treatment of clients, implementation of behavior management plans, and data collection.
- Respond quickly to emergency situations, such as fires or choking incidents.
- Maintain personal hygiene.
- Execute universal precautions during all clinical interactions.

SENSORY ABILITIES

- Possess hearing acuity sufficient for making accurate judgments about linguistic and/or acoustic signals.
- Possess visual acuity sufficient for monitoring therapy materials and client responses.

Developed by the MSUM SLHS Dept Graduate Committee, with dept. input, 12/18