

**Essential Functions for Entering/Enrolled  
Speech-Language Pathology Students  
(For Master of Science Degree Program)  
Department of Speech-Language Pathology  
College of Health Sciences, Education and Rehabilitation  
Salus University  
Elkins Park, PA**

The following Essential Functions (EFs) are consistent with the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association didactic and clinical skill performance guidelines expected of or implied for graduate level speech-language pathology students and professionals. Students enrolled in Master of Science degree program in speech-language pathology within the College of Education and Rehabilitation at Salus University are expected to either demonstrate many of these essential functions prior to enrollment, or acquire these EFs by the end of their program of study.

More specifically, the essential functions represent the communication, physical, behavioral/social and cognitive/intellectual skills needed to achieve the knowledge, skills and levels of competency stipulated for graduation from the M.S. Degree Program by the faculty within the Department of Speech-Language Pathology. The EFs are expected traits and characteristics to be exhibited by students enrolled in the M.S. Degree graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology. Many of these traits are identified in educational and credentialing standards established by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (CAA) the Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; and the Council on Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD).

Here is what the EFs mean for either students seeking admissions to our graduate program in speech-language pathology or who are currently enrolled in the program.

- 1) Students admitted to the SLP M.S. Degree program must demonstrate the abilities and skills listed below.
- 2) The abilities are required for admission and/or must be developed and maintained throughout the two-year course of study as a student progresses through the M.S. Degree program in speech-language pathology.
- 3) In the event that, during training, a student is unable or refuses to acquire and demonstrate these essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodations, then the student may be asked to leave or be dismissed from the program.

**A. Communication Abilities/General:**

1. Speak intelligibly and articulately, exhibiting no non-dialectical mispronunciations of English speech sounds (phonemes) nor acquired second languages (i.e. Spanish);
2. Hear sufficiently at a level that includes high and low frequency speech sounds of English;
3. Possess demonstrated reading comprehension and speed at a level sufficient to accomplish curricular requirements and provide timely and efficient clinical care for patients/clients;
4. Complete appropriate medical records, documentation and plans according to protocol in a thorough and timely manner;
5. Write legibly and cohesively with minimal to no grammatical/spelling errors while providing a logical sequence of information (i.e., introduction/topic sentence, body of content, conclusion, recommendations, SOAP notations);
6. Communicate and interact effectively with people in person, by phone, and in writing by considering the communication needs and cultural values of the listener(s) (e.g., client, family member, professional health colleague). Adapt to the language, speech and non-verbal interactions of the patients/clients and family members accordingly or use an interpreter/translator to do so.

**B. Physical Abilities:**

1. Participate in professional responsibilities/activities for up to four-hour blocks of time with one or two breaks;
2. Move independently to, from, and in clinics and work settings;
3. Provide for one's own personal hygiene;
4. Manipulate screening/diagnostic materials, including completion of screening/evaluation protocols;
5. Effectively implement a treatment plan that is appropriate for the client, including use and manipulation of materials/instrumentation and printed or computerized data collection;
6. Provide a safe environment for others in responding quickly to emergency situations including fire, choking, unconsciousness etc., and in the application of universal precautions;
7. Engage in education, training, certification and re-certification of Basic Resuscitation and Cardiac skills (including appropriate use of defibrillators) for infant, pediatric and adult clients based on American Heart/Red Cross standards;
8. Monitor client responses to diagnostic and treatment materials and quickly manipulate or alter the use of materials based on client responses (i.e., effective vs. ineffective treatment outcome);
9. Make accurate judgments about speech and/or acoustic signals using perceptual and objective (clinical equipment) data and accurately interpreting data obtained;
10. Drive, transport, engage in a car pool and/or use public transportation (bus, rail train) to assure classroom, on-campus clinic and externship clinical sites attendance that is timely and consistent. Proof of a legal driver's license, self-auto insurance and reliable, safe transportation is required for speech-language pathology students who drive;

11. Maneuver patients who rely on wheel chairs, walking canes and general support (e.g., walking arm-in-arm or arm-to-waist with client) to transport client to/from waiting area and clinic treatment room;
12. Squat, sit down on pediatric furniture and/or sit on the floor with pediatric clients;
13. Demonstrate finger/hand dexterity to handle writing instruments, eating/feeding utensils, small and large play objects, iPods, and associated computer applications.

**C. Behavioral and Social Attributes:**

1. Maintain emotional and mental health required for use of intellectual abilities, prompt completion of responsibilities, and development of appropriate relationships with faculty, clinical supervisors (on-campus and external site supervisors) clients, SLP student colleagues and interprofessional, intercollaborative student and professional team members;
2. Maintain composure and emotional stability in demanding or challenging situations;
3. Exhibit flexibility and adaptation to changing environments and situations;
4. Fully honor and engage in cultural competency development through exposure to a variety of school and medical clinical placement settings and learn about the history of various traditionally recognized and newer cultural groups gaining recognition in the U.S. that reflect the pluralistic society of Philadelphia, the state of Pennsylvania and the nation at large. Additionally continuously self-assess perceptions of the role of the speech-language pathologist as a culturally competent global citizen;
5. Understand and respect faculty and clinical supervisory authority. Maintain a ‘teachable spirit’ that is respectful of those in leadership positions at the Department, College, University and External Clinical Site levels;
6. Maintain appropriate professional behavior, including punctuality, appropriate professional dress attire, regular attendance and adherence to timelines for report submissions, lesson planning and preparation, portfolio documentation, and the timely preparation of clinical session materials prior to client arriving for these sessions;
7. Demonstrate compassion, integrity, interest, and motivation when delivering professional services to other individuals;
8. Familiarize ones’ self and abide by the ASHA code of ethics and scopes of practice when delivering clinical service as a student and future professional in speech-language pathology.

**D. Intellectual Abilities:**

1. Demonstrate the mental capacity to read, listen to, learn, assimilate and use didactic and clinical information, including the ability to read and comprehend professional literature and reports;
2. Solve clinical problems through critical analysis and evidence-based practice;
3. Seek relevant case information, synthesize, and apply concepts and information from various sources and disciplines;
4. Write discipline-specific papers and clinical reports using spelling, phonetics, grammar (syntax) and content (semantics) characteristics of Standard English;

5. Speak American English intelligibly, relative to personal dialect, including the ability to model all English phonemes in isolation, phrases, sentences and conversational contents;
6. Demonstrate ability to depict when speech-language-swallowing patterns of clients are disordered requiring further assessment and intervention;
7. Analyze, synthesize, and interpret ideas and concepts in academic and diagnostic/treatment settings;
8. Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete didactic and clinical activities for up to 4-hour blocks of time with one or two breaks;
9. Schedule and prioritize activities, and provide documentation in a timely manner;
10. Comply with administrative, legal, ethical, and regulatory policies set forth by the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, the College of Education and Rehabilitation, Salus University, the state of Pennsylvania and other states across the U.S. as a future SLP practitioner;
11. Read, become familiar with and abide by the Code of Ethics and Scopes of Practice set forth by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association as a student and future speech-language pathology practitioner.