

**Arkansas State University
College of Nursing and Health Professions
Department of Communication Disorders**

Essential Functions of Candidates for Program Admission and Continuance

POLICY

The accredited graduate program in Communication Disorders (MCD) at Arkansas State University (ASU) adheres to the standards set by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Within ASHA standards, the MCD program has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the following: the selection of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum; the evaluation of student progress in both classroom and clinical activities; the determination of whom should be awarded a degree; and the determination of whom should be recommended for ASHA certification and state licensure.

When requested, the University, College and the Department will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with properly certified disabilities. However, the MCD faculty holds responsibility for the welfare of students in the Department and the clients we serve. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Department has established academic standards and minimum essential requirements that must be met with or without reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the program and graduate.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of speech-language pathology, to function in a broad variety of clinical situations, and to render a wide spectrum of patient care services, individuals must have essential skills and attributes in five areas: communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, sensory-observational, and behavioral-social. These skills enable a student to meet graduate and professional requirements as measured by state and national credentialing agencies. Many of these skills can be learned and developed during the course of the graduate program through coursework and clinical experience. Failure to meet or maintain Essential Functions may result in action against the student, including, but not limited to dismissal from the program.

Communication

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently using both oral and written English language.
- Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.
- Modify communication style to meet the communicative needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.

- Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

Motor

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- 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.
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.
- Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials

Intellectual / Cognitive

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- 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 skills and be able to identify and utilize resources in order to increase knowledge and skills.
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and independent decisions.

Sensory / Observational

A student must possess adequate sensory skills to:

- Visually and auditorily identify and discriminate normal and disordered communication.
- Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
- Visualize and identify anatomic structures.
- Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
- Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and/or verbal communication.

Behavioral / Social

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics and university and federal privacy policies.

- Maintain general good physical and mental health to prevent jeopardizing 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.
- Dress appropriately and professionally.

Reference: Adapted from the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2007)