Essential Functions for Performance in Clinical Practicums

The accredited programs in audiology and speech-language pathology of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CS&D) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison adhere to the standards set by the *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association* (ASHA), including a code of ethics https://www.asha.org/policy/ET2016-00342/ . Our faculty has responsibility for the welfare of clients/patients tested, treated, or otherwise affected by students enrolled in the CS&D program. Thus it is important that persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice speech-language pathology and audiology.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, the department has established academic standards and minimum essential functions for performance to participate in the clinical program and graduate. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory prior and ongoing academic achievement but also on non-academic factors that serve to ensure that the candidate possesses essential functions for performance in the clinical program required for graduation. Essential functions, as distinguished from academic and clinical standards, refer to those cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities that are necessary for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the development of professional attributes required by the faculty of all students at graduation.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison and our department seek to educate a diverse group of students recognizing that in such diversity lies excellence. Included in this group are otherwise qualified students who have disabilities. The University will provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified students with properly documented disabilities who meet the minimum CS&D requirements. Reasonable accommodations will be made to facilitate a student's progress in learning, performing and satisfying the essential functions presented in this document.

A reasonable accommodation should not fundamentally alter the academic and clinical requirements of the CS&D program, pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others, or present an undue burden to the institution. Determining appropriate and reasonable accommodations in a professional school program is an interactive and collaborative process involving the student, the CS&D program and the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center, which is the disability services office for the campus. To learn more about resources available to students with disabilities, or to begin the accommodation request process, please visit the McBurney Disability Resource Center website at www.mcburney.wisc.edu and click on "How to Become a McBurney Client."

The Following are the Essential Functions for Performance in Clinical Practicums:

PHYSICAL ABILITIES
- Maintain appropriate personal hygiene.

- Maintain reliable travel arrangements to and from classroom and practicums/externship settings.
- Meet the physical demands of practice across clinical settings.
- Participate in professional responsibilities/activities for up to four-hour blocks of time with breaks appropriate to the clinical setting.
- Use fine motor skills to navigate the outer ear and speech mechanism, e.g., ear canal impressions, otoscopy, hearing aid fittings, oral mechanism exams, swallowing protocols.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES, continued
- Manipulate equipment and materials to complete screening and evaluation protocols and treatment and behavior plans.
- Visually monitor client/patient responses and materials.
- Provide a safe environment for others when responding to emergency situations such as fire or choking or other medical emergencies, and in the application of universal precautions.
- Make accurate judgments about linguistic and/or acoustic signals.

COGNITIVE ABILITIES
- Assimilate information, including the ability to comprehend professional literature and reports.
- Generate discipline-specific documents and clinical reports in English.
- Seek relevant case information, synthesize, and apply concepts and information from various sources and disciplines.
- Analyze, synthesize, and interpret ideas and concepts in academic and diagnostic/treatment settings.
- Solve clinical problems through critical analysis.

BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES
- Comply with administrative, legal, and regulatory policies.
- Demonstrate regular attendance and meet responsibilities in a timely manner.
- Develop and maintain appropriate relationships with clients/patients and colleagues.
- Maintain composure in demanding situations.
- Adapt rapidly to changing environments and situations.
- Communicate effectively with people in person, by phone, and in written form by considering the communication needs and cultural values of the listener.
- Understand and respect authority.
- Maintain appropriate professional behavior and adhere to the ASHA code of ethics.
- Collaborate effectively with other professionals.
- Accurately model English phonemes.
- Demonstrate proficiency in written and spoken English.

Procedure when student does not meet an Essential Function

- Clinical professor identifies student as not meeting an Essential Function.
- Clinical professor alerts student's academic advisor and department chair (if identified in academic setting) or clinic director (if identified as a part of clinical practicums).
- Students in audiology and speech-language will be brought to the attention of the clinical faculty area group. A conference will be held with the clinical professor(s) assigned to the student, department chair/clinic director, and student's advisor to review the concern(s) with student and determine a recommended course of action. A Clinical Performance Improvement Plan may be developed to guide next steps. Documentation of the conference and recommended course of action will be placed in student's file.