# Core Functions for Graduate Students in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at Missouri State University

This document identifies the core functions that audiology and speech-language pathology students are expected to employ in didactic and clinical experiences to acquire the knowledge and demonstrate the competencies that will lead to graduation and successful entry into professional practice. It was adapted from “A Guide for Future Practitioners in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology: Core Functions” updated by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) in 2023. The Core Functions below aim to be inclusive. The Core Functions are also designed to facilitate discussions between students and faculty regarding any strategies, resources, and accommodations that may be necessary to achieve student success. The Core Functions below set the context for student knowledge and skill acquisition necessary to take personal responsibility for the individual care of clients and patients. To initiate a discussion regarding the Core Functions below, students are encouraged to contact their academic advisor or the program director. An additional contact may be the MSU Disability Resource Center (<https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/>).

**Communication**

Statements in this section acknowledge that audiologists and speech-language pathologists must communicate in a way that is understood by their clients/patients and others. Communication may occur in different modalities depending on the joint needs of involved parties and may be supported through various accommodations as deemed reasonable and appropriate to client/patient needs.

* Employ oral, written, auditory, and non-verbal communication at a level sufficient to meet academic and clinical competencies. This includes ability to write discipline-specific papers and clinical reports in Standard American English.
* Adapt communication style to effectively interact with colleagues, clients, patients, caregivers, and invested parties of diverse backgrounds in various modes such as in person, over the phone, and in electronic format.
* Provide appropriate models of target behaviors according to the needs of individual clients.

**Motor/Physical**

Statements in this section acknowledge that clinical practice by audiologists and speech-language pathologists involves a variety of tasks that require manipulation of items and environments. It is recognized that this may be accomplished through a variety of means as deemed reasonable to offer and appropriate to client/patient needs.

* Engage in physical activities at a level required to accurately implement classroom and clinical responsibilities (e.g., manipulating testing and therapeutic equipment and technology, client/patient equipment, and practice management technology) while retaining the integrity of the process
* Respond in a manner that ensures the safety of clients and others
* Provide or independently secure transportation to/from clinical sites
* Participate in professional responsibilities/activities for up to 8-10 hour shifts

**Sensory**

Statements in this section acknowledge that audiologists and speech-language pathologists use auditory, visual, tactile, and olfactory information to guide clinical practice. It is recognized that such information may be accessed through a variety of means, including direct sensory perception and /or adaptive strategies.

* Use sensory information to differentiate functional and disordered auditory, oral, written, and visual communication; to correctly differentiate anatomical structures and diagnostic imaging findings; to correctly differentiate and discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests

**Intellectual/Cognitive**

Statements in this section acknowledge that audiologists and speech-language pathologists must engage in critical thinking, reasoning, and comprehension and retention of information required in clinical practice. It is recognized that such skills may be fostered through a variety of means as deemed reasonable and appropriate to client/patient needs.

* Retain, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply auditory, written, and oral information at a level sufficient to meet curricular and clinical competencies
* Employ informed critical thinking and ethical reasoning to formulate a differential diagnosis and create, implement, and adjust evaluation and treatment plans as appropriate for the client/patient's needs
* Engage in ongoing self-reflection and evaluation of one's existing knowledge and skills
* Critically examine and apply evidence-based judgment in keeping with best practices for client/patient care
* Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete clinical activities

**Interpersonal**

Statements in this section acknowledge that audiologists and speech-language pathologists must interact with a diverse community of individuals in a manner that is safe, ethical, and supportive. It is recognized that personal interaction styles may vary by individuals and cultures and that good clinical practice honors such diversity while meeting this obligation.

* Display compassion, respect, and concern for others during all academic and clinical interactions
* Adhere to all aspects of relevant professional codes of ethics, privacy, information management policies, and program policies
* Take personal responsibility for maintaining physical and mental health at a level that ensures safe, respectful, and successful participation in didactic and clinical activities
* Understand and respect supervisory authority
* Collaborate with peers and other professionals

**Cultural Responsiveness**

Statements in this section acknowledge that audiologists and speech-language pathologists have an obligation to practice in a manner responsive to individuals from different cultures, linguistic communities, social identities, beliefs, values, and worldviews. This includes people representing a variety of abilities, ages, cultures, dialects, disabilities, ethnicities, genders, gender identities or expressions, languages, national/regional origins, races, religions, sexes, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and lived experiences.

* Engage in ongoing learning about cultures and belief systems different from one's own and the impacts of these on healthcare and educational disparities to foster effective provision of services.
* Demonstrate the application of culturally responsive evidence-based decisions to guide clinical practice

\*Students should be aware that external clinical placements are part of the plan of study. External sites may have different expectations related to essential/core functions.

Adapted from: Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2023). A guide for future practitioners in audiology and speech-language pathology: Core functions. <https://www.capcsd.org/academic-and-clinical-resources/>