

**Loma Linda University**  
**Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**  
**Essential Functions for Students**

The Essential Functions for Students refers to a guide of behavioral or cognitive functions that an individual must be able to perform, with or without accommodations, during their academic and clinical experiences. This list was developed based on recommendations by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD). The skills listed below have been determined by Loma Linda University's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to be skills that are necessary to demonstrate competencies that will lead to graduation and a successful entry into professional practice. While some of the Essential Functions listed may already be present, this program will introduce new skills and further develop current skills to prepare students for successful navigation as professionals.

**PHYSICAL ABILITIES**

- Participate in classroom or clinical activities for two to four-hour blocks of time, with one or two breaks.
- Move independently to, from, and in academic/clinical facilities with or without a personal assistance device such as a wheelchair or braces.
- Manipulate diagnostic and intervention materials and technology without violating the integrity of testing protocols and best therapeutic practices.
- Respond quickly and provide a safe environment for clients and others in emergency situations, including but not limited to fire, choking, client elopement, etc.
- Review and interpret instrumentation and monitor client responses.
- Execute movements required to document academic (e.g., note taking) and clinical (e.g., data collection during therapy, clinical report writing, note taking during client interviewing) information via computer or handwritten notes with acuity, accuracy, and efficiency.

**COGNITIVE ABILITIES**

- Possesses reading and writing skills sufficient to comprehend, retain, synthesize, infer, evaluate, and apply received information necessary to meet curricular and clinical demands.
- Independently analyze, synthesize, and interpret ideas and concepts in academic and clinical settings with or without reasonable accommodations that may apply to a professional environment.
- Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete academic/clinical activities, within stated deadlines.
- Adapt evaluation and intervention activities in response to a client's abilities and cultural needs in clinical and academic tasks.
- Engage in self-analysis to identify strengths and areas for improvement and seek to develop a plan to address academic and clinical needs.
- Identify and professionally advocate for one's own need for support and resources to fulfill clinical and academic tasks.

**COMMUNICATION ABILITIES**

- Possess oral, written, auditory, and non-verbal communication skills sufficient to meet academic and clinical competencies.
- Communicate proficiently in oral and written English language.
- Perceive and demonstrate non-verbal communication that is appropriate to culture and context.
- Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.
- Communicate professionally, intelligibly, and efficiently with patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

**SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL ABILITIES**

- Visually and auditorily identify typical and atypical characteristics of communication and swallowing.
- Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
- Visualize and discriminate anatomic structures and imaging findings on people and photographs within academic and clinical settings.
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic and treatment materials and instruments and research articles.
- Recognize shifts in the non-verbal communication of clients, caregivers, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.

**PRE-PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

- Align priorities to prevent work and other obligations from interfering with academic and/or clinical expectations and responsibilities.
- Manage commuting to classes and clinical sites to complete requirements and adhere to attendance requirements.
- Manage relocating for Fieldwork II assignments, as determined via collaboration with the Director of Clinical Education, to complete clinical practicum requirements of the program.
- Work effectively with people, in person, and on the telephone/video platforms.
- Critically think through decisions, weighing alternative options and generalizing without immediate supervision.
- Demonstrate healthy conflict management while valuing diverse communication styles.
- Maintain professional workplace behavior, including punctuality and regular attendance.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL**

- Display mature empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
- Recognize and show respect for individuals with diverse abilities, ages, genders, race, religion, sexual orientation, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner that upholds the university policies, state regulations, ASHA Code of Ethics, and federal privacy practices.
- Maintain, or seek support for, general good physical and mental health and self-care to contribute to the health and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical setting.
- Adapt to changing and demanding environments, while maintaining professionalism and emotional health.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modifying behaviors and communicating concerns.

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is committed to supporting students with disabilities through reasonable accommodations conducive to speech-language pathology and completing the master’s degree. Students who need accommodation(s) should contact the Dean’s Office for the School of Allied Health.

I have read the list of Essential Functions and have no concerns about my ability to carry out these functions with or without accommodations. I understand that reasonable accommodations may be requested, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and such accommodations do not include requests that require a removal of an essential function or a lowered production standard relevant to academic, clinical, and professional settings.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Clinical Placement Policy**

I understand that, if admitted to this program, I may be required to complete my full-time Fieldwork II experience out of town or out of state. I also understand that I am responsible for my own transportation to all clinical placements and that these may not be convenient in terms of distance or travel.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Policy**

My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to abide by the Department's policy that specifically prohibits working as a Speech-Language Pathologist on a Variable Term Waiver (AKA: Waiver), as long as I am enrolled in the program. I also understand that violation of this policy is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_