



**University of Pittsburgh**

**School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences**

**Department of Communication Science and Disorders**

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## **Technical Standards Graduate Clinical Program in Speech-Language Pathology (MA/MS-SLP)**

To acquire requisite knowledge and skills to practice as a speech-language pathologist, graduate students must be able to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and provide a wide spectrum of patient care. Students must possess certain skills and abilities to successfully complete both the academic and clinical components of the curriculum with or without reasonable accommodations for disabilities. All graduates must be able to perform tasks such as: taking a case history, completing a diagnostic evaluation of speech, language and swallowing function. They must also be able to synthesize these findings into a diagnosis and plan of treatment. Ultimately, these tasks must be accomplished independently, without aid of an intermediary.

These skills and abilities are divided into five areas: *communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, sensory-observational and behavioral-social*. Students must be able to undertake all curricular requirements to the satisfaction of faculty to become competent and reliable practitioners. To this end, the Faculty of the Department of Communication Science & Disorders has established the non-academic criteria (Technical Standards) that graduate students must possess to enroll in and to continue in academic courses and clinical placements required for the MA/MS degree.

### ***General Guidelines***

The Master's degree in Speech Language Pathology (SLP) is typically a two-year program that requires the acquisition of professional attitudes, skills and behavior as well as the accumulation of scientific knowledge. Graduates of the program will complete resident didactic and clinical education. The SLP degree certifies that the student has acquired the broad base of knowledge and skills required for the practice of speech language pathology and is eligible to begin the Clinical Fellowship, leading to professional certification and licensure. These standards are rigorous and exacting so admission can be offered only to those individuals best-qualified to meet the performance standards of the profession.

Acceptance is offered to those who present the highest qualifications for the study and practice of speech-language pathology. Graduates of the program must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates for the MA/MS-SLP degree must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision, hearing and smell. Diagnostic skills will be lessened if the student does not have functional use of the sense of balance and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections that follow. They must be able consistently, quickly and accurately to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

Candidates for the MA/MS-SLP degree must have abilities and skills in the five areas outlined below. Technological compensation or reasonable accommodations can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas but a candidate should be able to perform all of these tasks in a reasonably independent manner.

## ***Speech-Language Pathology Technical Standards (cont.)***

***Communication.*** A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate effectively and proficiently in oral and written English
  - English language skills must be at a level that can be easily understood by clients and colleagues for general interactions, for administration of tests and implementation of treatment as judged by a panel of CSD faculty.
- Read and write to meet curricular and clinical demands
- Demonstrate and perceive non-verbal communication that is appropriate for culture and context
- Perceive the speech of clients and accurately judge its quality
- Appropriately model examples of articulation, resonance, fluency, voice, English grammar and syntax for clients
- Communicate with patients, families, peers and colleagues at an appropriate and professional level
- Clearly record examination results, treatment observations and treatment plans
- Compose both clinical reports and scholarly papers required of clinical practicum and academic courses
- Accurately convey information with relevance and cultural sensitivity

***Motor.*** A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain the necessary physical activity level required in classroom and clinical activities
- Respond quickly in the event of an emergency situation (fire, choking, etc) to provide patients a safe environment
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placement sites
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the required days and evenings.
- Manage the clinical environment without compromising either test protocol or best practice guidelines
- Safely and reliably manipulate patient equipment (e.g., computers, Nasometer, Visipitch, hearing aids, AAC devices, etc.)
- Safely and reliably perform an examination of the oral mechanism (e.g., conduct oral musculature palpation)
- Access technology for clinical and academic requirements (e.g., billing, medical charts, courseweb, etc.)

***Intellectual/Cognitive.*** A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, assimilate, analyze, synthesize, integrate concepts and problem solve
- Formulate written and verbal assessments and therapeutic judgments to meet curricular and clinical demands
- Identify and communicate the limits of their own knowledge and skills
- Utilize resources to increase their own base of knowledge and skills

***Sensory/Observational.*** A student must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, tactile, and smell to:

- Effectively observe and function (in visual and auditory modalities) in both clinical and academic settings
  - Record and evaluate physical status as well as verbal and non-verbal responses to sensory stimuli
- Visually identify anatomic structures of the speech mechanisms
  - Accurately complete a visual examination of oral, pharyngeal and respiratory mechanisms
- Identify the need for alternative communication modalities
- Comprehend text, numbers and graphs

*Speech-Language Pathology Technical Standards (cont.)*

***Behavioral/Social.*** A student must possess:

- Appropriate interpersonal skills and the demeanor and rapport necessary for quality patient care
- The emotional health to carry out the tasks set forth above
- The capacity to maintain composure and continue to function well during periods of high stress
- The perseverance, diligence and commitment to complete professional program requirements
- The flexibility and the ability to adjust to the changing situations and uncertainty inherent in clinical situations
- The ability to critically evaluate his or her own performance and identify tactics to improve performance, both with and independent of faculty assistance
- Compassion, integrity and empathy for others
- The ability to show respect for individuals with disabilities and those of differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, races, religions and/or sexual orientations

Candidates for graduate degrees in the Department of Communication Science & Disorders are required to meet the above technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation for disabilities. Disability self-identification is voluntary and confidential. The University of Pittsburgh offers academic support accommodations for qualified, eligible students with disabilities. Please contact our Office of Disability Resources and Services (412-648-7890) for information regarding eligibility requirements and deadlines that will ensure reasonable accommodations (which may require extensive preparation time) can be arranged before the beginning of the term.



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### Technical Standards Statement

**I certify that I have read and understand the attached technical standards and I believe to the best of my knowledge that I am able to meet each of these standards.**

*without accommodation*  *with reasonable accommodation for a disability*

**I understand that if I am unable to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodation now or in the future, I will be denied permission to enroll or continue in the program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Please Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

### RESOURCES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

If you need disability-related accommodation to satisfy the requirements of this program, you must contact the University of Pittsburgh Disability Resources and Services Office (412-648-7890) for an assessment of your eligibility for and the reasonableness of accommodations.

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