

**University of Akron
School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Audiology and Speech Center**

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The technical standards of the University of Akron School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology & Audiology and Speech Center reflect the essential qualities and abilities that are considered necessary to a student's academic and clinical performance. Once admitted, ability to meet these technical standards must be maintained throughout a student's progress in the graduate program. In the event that, during training, a student is unable to fulfill these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, then the student may be asked to leave the program.

The Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology is designed to prepare students to enter the profession as a generalist with skills, knowledge, and ability to perform successfully all the required functions associated with the role of an entry-level speech-language pathologist. In keeping with applicable federal and state law regarding disabilities and our program philosophy, we are committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities to enable them to perform successfully the skills necessary to fulfill the role of a speech-language pathologist. **If a student has a disability that they feel may require special accommodation to perform any of the tasks identified as essential to the clinical practice of speech-language pathology, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Office of Accessibility so appropriate steps can be taken to accommodate the student's needs.**

Students should carefully review the technical standards below to determine whether or not they can meet these standards (with or without accommodation).

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

To perform the essential functions of a speech-language pathologist and be successful in the MA graduate program, an individual must possess specific skills and abilities in the following five areas:

- 1. Communication**
- 2. Sensory/Observation Skills**
- 3. Psychomotor Skills**
- 4. Cognitive Abilities**
- 5. Affective/Behavioral/Social Skills**

1. Communication Skills

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- ◆ Communicate proficiently in 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 communication needs of clients/patients, caregivers, and other persons served.
- ◆ Communicate professionally and intelligibly with clients/patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- ◆ Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
- ◆ Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

2. Sensory/Observation Skills

A student must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, tactile, and smell to:

- ◆ Observe client's/patient's activity and behavior to visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered communication during assessment and treatment procedures.
- ◆ Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication
- ◆ Visualize and identify anatomic structures
- ◆ Read, comprehend, and interpret information (text, numbers, tables, and graphs) accurately from diagnostic test, equipment, and client records.
- ◆ Accurately monitor through both visual and auditory modalities, materials and equipment used for assessment and treatment of patients.
- ◆ Visualize, identify, and discriminate imaging findings
- ◆ Recognize when a client's/patient's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and/or verbal communication

3. Psychomotor Skills

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- ◆ Attend and arrive on time to lecture and laboratory classes, and access laboratories, classrooms, and work stations.
- ◆ Attend clinical internships/externships in assigned locations.
- ◆ Sustain necessary physical activity level in required clinical and academic settings.
- ◆ Have the fine motor coordination to accurately and efficiently use materials/equipment used for assessment and treatment of patients.

- ◆ Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients/patients in emergency situations including fire, choking, etc.
- ◆ Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc) in a safe manner
- ◆ Access technology for clinical management (i.e. billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.)

4. Cognitive Abilities

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- ◆ Comprehend, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate, and apply a large body of information/knowledge in a short period of time.
- ◆ Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan
- ◆ Solve problems, reason, analyze, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic, and therapeutic plan implementation when analyzing complex patient problems.
- ◆ Reflect on clinical and academic performance and self assess performance accurately.
- ◆ Utilize appropriate and effective spoken, written and non-verbal communication. Students must be able to understand and speak the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.

5. Affective/Behavioral/Social Skills

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
- ◆ Demonstrate appreciation and respect for individual, social, and cultural differences in fellow students, colleagues, staff, and patients.
- ◆ Demonstrate appropriate behaviors, to protect the safety and well-being of clients/patients and classmates.
- ◆ Possess and demonstrate empathy, and demonstrate commitment to the role of health care provider.
- ◆ Demonstrate ability to appropriately handle situations that may be emotionally, physically, or intellectually stressful.
- ◆ Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in academic and clinical situations.

- ◆ Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within a realistic time constraints
- ◆ Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors
- ◆ Dress appropriately and professionally
- ◆ Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and professionalism.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality of patient information.
- ◆ Provide services to all clients/patients regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, age, handicap, status as a veteran, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, or national or ethnic origin.

Continuation in the graduate program will be contingent on the student's verification that they understand and meet these technical standards either with or without accommodation. **Students who may have a disability and believe they can meet the technical standards with accommodation are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility** to discuss and identify reasonable accommodations the University or program would need to make so the candidate may be able to meet these standards.

Technical Standards: Procedures for Enforcement

The technical standards of the University of Akron School of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology & Audiology and Speech Center reflect the essential qualities and abilities that are considered necessary to a student's academic and clinical performance. Ability to meet these technical standards must be maintained throughout a student's progress throughout the graduate program. The technical standards are tied to all academic and clinical coursework, and are included in the syllabi of all faculty.

These standards were approved by the faculty of the School of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology in the Spring 2018.

If an area of concern arises with a student regarding violation of any Technical Standard(s), the following steps will be taken:

- The issue of a suspected violation may be raised by the following sources: faculty, supervisors, staff, clients/patients, caregivers, or fellow student(s). This concern should be submitted in writing to the School Director of The University of Akron.
- A conference to discuss this concern will be held with the student, the School Director, the Graduate Coordinator and/or Clinic Director, academic advisor, and any other appropriate faculty members/preceptors.

- Factual information, such as but not limited to supervisor evaluations, grades, written incident reports that document date/time/place, written statements of individuals, or written witness accounts will be provided regarding the concern. The factual information required will be decided upon on a case by case basis.
- If the committee determines that a violation has occurred, a written warning will be issued to the student, along with a plan to remediate the issue. This plan will be signed by the student and Graduate Coordinator and/or Clinic Director, indicating that the student agrees to the plan. The student will be given the opportunity to provide a written response regarding the concern; the written response must be submitted within one month of the issuance of the written warning.
- If a student disagrees with the initiation of the plan, refuses to participate in, or fails to agree to the terms of the plan, the student may be disciplined, which may include dismissal from the program.
 - If it is determined at any point in the process that no violation has occurred or the concern is unfounded, then no action will be taken. Documentation to this effect will be placed in the student's file.
- Copies of the developed support plan will go to the School Director, the Graduate Coordinator and/or Clinic Director, the student's academic advisor, and to the student's permanent file.
- A follow-up conference or conferences will be scheduled, with the date for completion included in the plan. This follow-up conference will be held no later than one year after the original conference.
- At the follow-up conference, which will include the same people listed above, it will be determined if the plan has been successfully completed.
- If the plan has been successful, it will be considered to be achieved; a memo to this fact will be written and distributed to the School Director, the Graduate Coordinator and/or Clinic Director, the student's academic advisor, and to the student's permanent file.
- If the student is non-compliant with the plan, is unable to complete the plan or additional violations regarding the technical standards arise, the faculty will determine the next course of action:
 - Education/Counseling
 - Remediation
 - Referral to Student Judicial Affairs
 - Dismissal from the program
 - Contacting appropriate authorities

- At any time if it is determined by the faculty that a student's behavior poses a risk to the health or safety of clients/patients, faculty, supervisors, staff or fellow students, the case will be referred by the School Director to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The Dean of the College of Health Professions will be notified of this referral.

PLEASE SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW:

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE TECHNICAL STANDARDS LISTED ABOVE AND THAT I BELIEVE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE THAT I MEET EACH OF THESE STANDARDS EITHER WITHOUT OR WITH ACCOMMODATION. I WILL CONTACT THE OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY TO DETERMINE WHAT ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AVAILABLE. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I AM UNABLE TO MEET THESE STANDARDS, I MAY BE DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM.

Signature of Applicant

Date