



## College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

University of Iowa  
250 Hawkins Drive  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-0000  
319-335-8718  
clas.uiowa.edu/comsci

### **Supporting Student Success in the UI CSD Programs**

The accredited programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at the University of Iowa adhere to the standards set by the *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association* (ASHA) including a code of ethics <http://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics/>. Faculty have responsibility for the welfare of clients/patients tested, treated, or otherwise affected by students enrolled in the CSD program. Thus, it is important that persons in our clinical programs possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice speech-language pathology and audiology. Furthermore, the University of Iowa and our department seek to educate a diverse group of students, recognizing that in such diversity lies excellence.

This document describes department and campus-wide resources that are available to support student success in our graduate clinical training programs, and outlines the essential functions routinely performed by practicing speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists (AuDs) in a variety of settings. Essential functions, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to the cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities, as well as attributes, that are necessary for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum. We acknowledge that many of these characteristics can be tied to a student's gender expression, race, ethnicity, and other life experiences. These abilities will be interpreted with an appreciation of the cultural context of the student and the client.

We encourage all students entering the clinical programs to read through this document and consider their potential to achieve the essential functions described. Students who anticipate difficulty performing these functions in either classroom or clinical settings are encouraged to seek out the necessary departmental and/or campus resources (including the Director of Clinical Programs or the Director of Graduate Studies) to ensure their success in the training programs. Each student will be asked to sign the Essential Function document at the time of their initial registration in the program.

### **Campus Resources**

#### **Language of instruction**

English is the primary language of instruction at the University of Iowa, in classroom and clinical education. Students who are non-native speakers of English must display English proficiency by obtaining a score of 81 or above the TOEFL iBT or iBT home edition. Students who are not proficient in English can seek resources at <https://clas.uiowa.edu/esl/> to ensure that they are prepared for English language requirements in the classroom and clinic.

## **Accommodating disabilities**

UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as motor, sensory, cognitive, mental health, or health-related conditions) by registering with the office of Student Disability Services (SDS). Students are encouraged to proactively arrange accommodations early in each semester. The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at <https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>. A reasonable accommodation should not fundamentally alter the academic and clinical requirements of the CSD 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 is an interactive and collaborative process involving the student, the CSD program, the SDS and the General Counsel Office re: ADA compliance.

## **Accommodating personal emergencies**

The Department Chair, Department Administrator, Directors of Graduate Studies, and/or the Directors of Clinical Programs are available to provide assistance and resources as needed. In addition, University wide services (including for personal emergencies) is available through the office of the Dean of Students <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/>. Student Care and Assistance is a 'central location that provides coordinated efforts along with campus partners to assist students with overcoming challenges to be successful...'

## **Ensuring health and wellbeing**

Student health (<https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/>) and University Counseling Service (<https://counseling.uiowa.edu/>) are available to help facilitate health and well-being for all students.

### **Essential Functions Performed by SLPs and AuDs**

SLPs and audiologists provide clinical services to individuals and families in diverse settings. Specifically, clinicians are responsible for providing a variety of services in their areas of expertise including: educating people about communication processes and disorders, developing diagnostic and treatment plans for individual cases, implementing and modifying these plans, and assessing outcomes.

Students develop required practical skills through experiences offered in clinical settings (e.g., labs, onsite and offsite clinics) with licensed and certified SLPs and audiologists. Students learn about specific diagnostic and treatment instruments and procedures and hone the perceptual and technical skills required to perform the essential functions of state-of-the-art clinical practice.

A description of essential functions routinely performed by SLPs and audiologists across clinical settings is provided below. If students anticipate they may have difficulty gaining competence in any of these essential functions, they are encouraged to discuss this with their clinical educator or the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Clinical Programs.

## **Engaging in communication**

Practitioners must communicate effectively and intelligibly with patients/clients and their family members/caregivers, colleagues, other professionals (e.g., health care, education), and community or professional groups. Therefore, students are expected to:

- manage interpersonal interactions and communicate effectively across multiple modalities including in person, by phone, and in written form as defined by the clinical setting;

- adjust communication styles and modalities based on the communication needs and cultural values of the listener;
- access and use technology for clinical management (billing, AuD/SLP reports and notes, requesting and understanding client records).

### **Managing physical environments**

Practitioners must efficiently manipulate patient/client-utilized equipment, as well as clinical equipment, materials and environments, to adhere to assessment and treatment protocols and maintain best therapeutic practice. Therefore, students are expected to:

- make travel arrangements to and from classroom and practicum/externship settings;
- meet the physical demands of practice across clinical settings, including set up diagnostic and treatment spaces (arranging furniture, calibrating equipment);
- sustain necessary physical activity level required for classroom and clinical activities, including manipulating diagnostic and treatment instruments and tools effectively for patient/client care.

### **Taking responsibility for patient/client welfare**

Practitioners take primary responsibility in providing a safe and supportive environment for patients/clients under their immediate care. Therefore, students are expected to:

- anticipate patients'/clients' needs to support their full participation in clinical sessions (e.g., offering tissues, bathroom breaks, and appropriate physical and emotional support as needed);
- adapt clinical practices to promote patients'/clients' dignity and well-being. (e.g., providing instructions in multiple formats; involving family as requested);
- actively listen to patients'/clients' expectations and goals (e.g., ask questions and encourage open communication);
- respond with empathy and compassion to patients'/clients' situations and concerns;
- provide a safe environment for patients/clients (e.g., child-proofing, seizure management);
- safely manage disruptive, unexpected, and potentially dangerous patient/client behaviors (e.g., child running from room, angry adult);
- respond quickly and appropriately to emergency situations (e.g., fire, choking, medical conditions, mental health crisis).

### **Developing knowledge and skills**

Practitioners need to develop knowledge and skills in a variety of areas in AuD and SLP to ensure evidence-based practice. Therefore, students are expected to:

- assimilate information, including the ability to comprehend literature related to the profession and reports;
- 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;
- accurately self-evaluate one's own knowledge and skill.

### **Meeting expectations in multiple sites**

Practitioners maintain standards and adapt to the conditions and requirements of different working locations and environments. Graduate students will be required to engage in clinical settings at the Wendell Johnson Speech and Hearing Clinic and UIHC (or other nearby clinics or school systems). Therefore, students are expected to:

- adhere to ethical and legal standards of practice (ASHA code of ethics, AAA Code of ethics, Iowa State Licensure);
- comply with administrative, legal, and regulatory policies of all sites;
- demonstrate regular and reliable attendance and provision of services according to the scheduling and absence policies for each site;
- develop and maintain relationships with clients/patients and colleagues as defined by the clinical setting, including exhibiting empathy while maintaining boundaries;
- manage the use of time effectively to complete clinical tasks within time constraints defined by the clinical setting;
- maintain composure in demanding situations and adapt to changing situations in clinic and classroom;
- present self in a manner consistent with policies of varied clinical environments and their patients/clients. This includes personal hygiene, dress and communication;
- accept suggestions and constructive criticism that is essential to clinical education;
- implement infection protocols and universal precautions as outlined by each site.

**Supporting students who do not meet one or more of the essential functions:**

Clinical educators review the Essential Functions document and how it relates to individual students at the beginning of the training program and during mid-term and final reviews. If a clinical educator identifies any essential function not being met by a given student, the student's clinical educator will meet with the student to discuss the issue. During this meeting, the clinical educator will describe the area of need, explain why the essential function is needed, and answer the student's questions to ensure that they understand the expectations. The clinical educator and student will develop and document a plan which:

- states which essential function is not being met and how that was measured;
- specifically describes what is required to demonstrate that essential function;
- identifies any specific barriers and develops concrete steps to address them;
- utilizes input from others (i.e., other clinical educators, Director of Clinical Education, the student's academic advisor, CSD Department Chair, UI Student Disabilities Services, UI General Counsel);
- is placed in the student's record.

Successful completion of the plan allows the student to continue in the program.

*I have read and agree that I can meet the Essential Functions required by this program if I am admitted to the program. I understand that an inability to perform these essential functions would prolong or prevent graduation from the clinical program.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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

(Adapted from Student Success document from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)