



MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

A graduate school founded by Massachusetts General Hospital

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Essential Functions/Technical Standards

Approved by CSD Faculty on December 8, 2016

Introduction

The MGH Institute of Health Professions Department of Communication Science and Disorders offers a Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology. The program is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Academic and clinical coursework is designed to incorporate the department's commitment to all areas in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders, with emphasis on literacy and medical speech-language pathology, as well as the Institute's commitment to interprofessional practice. The Department strives to exceed the requirements set by the CAA and graduate students who meet the ASHA standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP).

To ensure students meet the academic and clinical competencies needed to practice as a Speech-Language Pathologist, students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in both academic and clinical coursework, as well as demonstrate competencies outlined on the Knowledge and Skills Assessment (KASA) form. Specific details regarding academic standards can be found in the [CSD Policies and Procedures Manual](#). ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) developed the KASA to define prerequisite standards for individuals entering the Clinical Fellowship (CF), a planned period of mentorship required for obtaining the CCC-SLP.

The MGH Institute of Health Professions takes seriously the Inclusive Excellence Model of Diversity. We do not discriminate on the basis of color, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, status as a parent, or national origin. The Institute respects and values the diverse backgrounds of all people and welcomes them to fully participate in campus life.

Technical Standards

The MGH Institute of Health Professions Communication Science and Disorders Department has a responsibility to ensure its graduates have demonstrated the competencies necessary for a Speech-Language Pathologist to provide quality, evidence based services to the public. Individuals matriculating in the program must demonstrate essential functions for the education and practice of Speech-Language Pathology. Technical standards are the fundamental skills or essential functions related to the cognitive, physical, social and behavioral abilities needed for successful completion of the academic and clinical competencies required for graduation. These technical standards align with the essential functions (2007) needed to meet the standards of practice established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2014).

The Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at the MGH Institute of Health Professions is committed to assisting qualified students with disabilities through reasonable means and accommodations to complete a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology. Prospective students, who need accommodations to meet these technical standards, should contact Disability Services within the Office of Student and Alumni Services. Current students are encouraged to contact the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department if they feel they may not be able to meet the technical standards explained below.

There are five identified essential function domains, each described below.

Communication

Prospective and current students must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Read and write sufficiently to meet curricular and clinical demands (e.g., medical records, standardized assessments, clinical reports, etc.).
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication effectively and respectfully in one-on-one and group settings in academic, community and clinical environments.
- Communicate proficiently in both spoken and written English language.

The MGH Institute of Health Professions Communication Science and Disorders Department is in agreement with and upholds the position of ASHA (1998), regarding professionals who speak with accents and/or non-mainstream dialects. ASHA's policy states:

"It is the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) that students and professionals in communication sciences and disorders who speak with accents and/or dialects can effectively provide speech, language, and audiological services to persons with communication disorders as long as they have the expected level of knowledge in normal and

disordered communication, the expected level of diagnostic and clinical case management skills, and if modeling is necessary, are able to model the target phoneme, grammatical feature, or other aspect of speech and language that characterizes the client's particular problem."

Physical Health/Motor Skills

Prospective students and current students must be able to:

- Sustain the necessary level of physical activity in required classroom and clinical activities including, but not limited to sitting and/or standing for long periods of time.
- Negotiate patient/client care environments, and be able to move between settings such as the classroom, health care facility, educational, or community settings.
- Participate in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.
- Access technology for clinical management (e.g., billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.), diagnostic testing and treatment protocols.

Sensory/Observational

Prospective student and current students must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, and touch to:

- Identify normal and disordered oral and written language, speech, voice, swallowing, cognition, hearing, and social interaction related to communication.
- Identify anatomic structures and imaging findings (e.g., MBSS, FEES, etc.).
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.

Intellectual/Cognitive

Prospective students and current students must possess and demonstrate adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
- Self evaluate, identify and communicate limits on one's own knowledge and skill to appropriate professional levels and be able to identify and utilize resources to increase knowledge.
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instructions to make unique and independent decisions.

Behavioral/Social

Prospective students and current students must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature, empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.

- Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics and Institute and federal privacy policies.
- Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health) in academic, clinical and community settings.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modifications of behaviors.

This policy was developed utilizing the following resources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2014). 2014 Standards and Implementation for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology. Retrieved from <http://www.asha.org/Certification/2014-Speech-Language-Pathology-Certification-Standards/>

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (1998). Students and Professional Who Speak English with Accents and Nonstandard Dialects: Issues and Recommendations. Retrieved from the internet at <http://www.asha.org/policy/PS1998-00117/>

Department of Communicative Disorders (2009). Essential Functions of Candidates for Graduate Program Admissions and Continuance. West Chester University, West Chester, PA.

Essential Functions Committee (2007). Eligibility Requirements and Essential Functions. Proceedings of the Council of Academic Programs in Communicative Sciences and Disorders. Retrieved from <http://www.capcsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFChecklist.pdf>

Essential Functions Committee (2007). Disability Law in Higher Education. Proceedings of the Council of Academic Programs in Communicative Sciences and Disorders Essential Functions Committee. Retrieved from the internet at <http://www.capcsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFslides.pdf>

Department of Physician Assistant Studies (2015). Technical Standards for Participation in Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. Retrieved from the internet at <https://www.mghihp.edu/technical-standards>