

# MERCY COLLEGE

## COMMUNICATION DISORDERS GRADUATE PROGRAM

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS<sup>+</sup>

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of speech-language pathology; to function in a broad variety of clinical situations; and to render a wide spectrum of client care, individuals must demonstrate skills and attributes in the following areas: *communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, and behavioral-social*.

The following essential functions enable a student to meet graduate education as well as professional requirements for state licensure and national certification. Those items marked with an asterisk (\*) are skills that students are expected to possess when they enter the graduate program. The remaining skills listed in each area are expected to be learned and developed during the course of the graduate program through academic and clinical education.

#### COMMUNICATION

Upon admission to the CD graduate program, a student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently in 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, caregivers, and other persons served\*

Throughout the curriculum, a student must learn and develop adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate professionally and intelligibly with clients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on client documentation, reports, and scholarly papers (required as a part of course work and clinical education)
- Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity

#### MOTOR

Upon admission to the CD graduate program, a student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities\*
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations (e.g., fire, choking, etc.)\*
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements\*
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined work day\*

Throughout the curriculum, a student must learn and develop adequate motor skills to:

- Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice
- Manipulate client-utilized equipment (e.g., durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc.) in a safe manner
- Access technology for clinical management

### **INTELLECTUAL/COGNITIVE**

Upon admission to the CD graduate program, a student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Recall, integrate, analyze, synthesize, infer, assimilate, evaluate, and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands\*

Throughout the curriculum, a student must learn and develop adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan
- Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in client assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation
- Self evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skill to appropriate professional level and be able to identify and utilize resources in order to increase knowledge
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and dependent decisions

### **BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL**

Upon admission to the CD graduate program, a student must possess adequate behavioral/social attributes to:

- Display mature, empathic 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, genders, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds\*
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, with the potential to comply with the ASHA Code of Ethics as well as college and federal policies\*
- Maintain general good physical and mental health and self care in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and others in the academic and clinical setting\*

Throughout the curriculum, a student must learn and develop adequate behavioral/social attributes to:

- Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health)
- Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors
- Dress appropriately and professionally

\*Adapted from Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD)  
(2007)