

**Doctoral Program in Audiology
Essential Functions/Technical Standards**

The Doctorate Program in Audiology has the responsibility of ensuring that our graduates demonstrate the skills, knowledge and competencies covered within the scope of practice of the Audiology profession. Individuals seeking admission into the Audiology program must possess the essential functions needed for the education and practice of clinical audiology. Essential functions are the fundamental skills or technical standards 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 are aligned with the essential functions for the profession established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2014).

The Audiology Program is committed to assisting qualified students through reasonable modifications to complete a Doctorate in Audiology. Reasonable modifications will be considered and may be made to qualified students with a health condition or situation that, according to the law, makes them eligible for reasonable accommodation so long as such accommodation does not significantly alter the essential requirements of the curriculum and the training program, or significantly affect the safety of patient care. Qualified students with a disability who wish to request accommodations should provide appropriate documentation of disability and submit a request for accommodation according to the procedure established in the document "Services for Reasonable Accommodation". This document may be obtained at the Office of Students with Disabilities.

All prospective and current students of the Doctoral Program in Audiology must possess the abilities and meet the essential functions described below. Reasonable modifications may be used to assist the students to meet these standards.

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

Sensory/Observational: Students must possess adequate sensory skills of vision, hearing, smell, and touch to:

- Identify normal and disordered oral and written language, speech, voice, cognition, hearing, and social interaction related to communication.
- Identify small anatomic structures of the head and neck, including, but not limited to, the ear and oral cavity.
- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
- Possess the ability to observe and read both, nearby and at a distance in bright and dark environments. Recognize and respond to subtle cues of patient's moods, temperament, and social behavior in the clinical setting, especially the pediatric population.
- Carry out speech/language/hearing/balance assessments and intervention strategies/techniques including the operation of complex, electronic instrumentation.

Communication: 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.).
- Demonstrate effective, respectful, and appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication in one-on-one and group settings in academic, community and clinical environments.
- Communicate proficiently in both spoken and written Spanish and English language.
- Communicate effectively with patients, faculty, staff, peers, and other health care professionals by demonstrating visual contact during conversations, possessing adequate speech articulation and fluency skills, and exhibiting adequate receptive and expressive language skills.
- Communicate respectfully, accept, and integrate feedback and constructive observations from patients, faculty, staff, peers, supervisors, and other healthcare professionals.
- Communicate limits on one's own knowledge and skills to faculty and clinical supervisors to request assistance.
- Regarding professionals who speak with accents and/or non-mainstream dialects the Doctoral Program in Audiology agrees with and upholds the position of ASHA (1998). 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." ASHA (1998)

Physical Health/Motor Skills: Students must be able to:

- Possess and sustain the necessary level of physical activity and health stamina required in the Doctoral program classroom, laboratories, and clinical scenarios including, but not limited to, sitting, bending and/or standing for long periods of time.
- Transfer independently between to and between educational and clinical settings such as the classrooms, laboratories, health care facilities, or communities.
- Assist patients of all ages in ambulation, positioning, and mobilization during diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.
- Carry and sustain a minimum of ten pounds for three to five minutes.
- Operate audiological equipment containing input dials, push buttons, toggle switches, mice, and keyboards, among others.
- Manually and visually manipulate small parts, such as, hearing aids, batteries, earmolds, tubing, probe tubes, among others.

Intellectual/Cognitive: Students must possess and demonstrate adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Solve problems and comprehend three-dimensional and spatial relationships.
- Comprehend, retain, integrate, analyze, synthesize, infer, and evaluate, written and verbal information related to curricular and clinical demands.

- Self-evaluate and identify limits on one's own knowledge and skill level to request assistance, feedback, and seek appropriate resources to increase knowledge and skills to the expected standards.
- Utilize detailed written and verbal instructions to carry out a task independently and make independent decisions, as necessary

Behavioral/Social: Students must possess emotional health and adequate behavioral and social attributes that are sufficient to carry out the tasks described in this document, including: Prospective students and current students must possess

- Have good judgment and behave in a professional, reliable, mature and responsible manner.
- Interchange and discuss ideas with a respectful attitude.
- 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, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner.
- Maintains professional demeanor and emotional control in academic, clinical, and community settings.
- Adapt and possess sufficient flexibility to function in new, demanding, and stressful environments.
- Critically evaluate her/his own performance, be forthright about errors, accept constructive criticism, seek, and implement corrective actions.
- Conform to appropriate standards of professional appearance, language, and behavior in all scenarios where the student is representing the Audiology Program.

An offer of admission to an Audiology program should not be interpreted as evidence that the Program has independently verified as applicant's attributes in the domains described in this document. Each student must certify that he/she meets all of the Essential functions set forth in this document prior to accepting admission into the Audiology Doctoral Program. Enrolled students must continue to meet all standards in order to continue and complete the degree requirements. Students who demonstrate an inability to meet all standards will be denied permission to continue in the doctoral program.

The essential skills/technical standards described above are essential if students are to be successful in achieving the competency standards of the profession.

I, _____, certify that have read the essential functions/technical standards required for the Audiology Doctoral Program at the University of Puerto Rico and possess the necessary sensory, motor, communicative, cognitive, and social skills to meet the required minimum standards required to be enrolled in the Program.

Signature

Date

This policy was adapted from 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* [Position Statement]. Retrieved from <http://www.asha.org/policy/PS1998-00117/>
- Department of Communicative Disorders West Chester University (2013). *Essential Functions of Candidates for Graduate Program Admissions and Continuance* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.wcupa.edu/healthSciences/commDisorder/madegree/documents/essentialFunctionsPolicy.pdf>
- Essential Functions Committee (2007). *Eligibility Requirements and Essential Functions. Proceedings of the Council of Academic Programs in Communicative Sciences and Disorders* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <http://www.capcsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFCchecklist.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 <http://www.capcsd.org/proceedings/2007/talks/EFslides.pdf>
- Department of Physician Assistant Studies (n.d.). *Technical Standards for Participation in Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program at the MGH Institute of Health Professions*. Retrieved from <https://www.mghihp.edu/technical-standards>
- Louisiana State University (n.d.). *Technical Standards & Professionalism Policy-Audiology Handbook LSU Health Sciences Center* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://alliedhealth.lsuhscc.edu/cd/docs/COMDTechStandardsAudiology.pdf>
- Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions (2016). *Essential Functions/Technical Standards* [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.mghihp.edu/sites/default/files/csd-essential-functions-12-16.pdf>
- The University of Kansas Medical Center (2018). *Technical Standards*. Retrieved from: [http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/hearing-and-speech/audiology-\(aud\)/technical-standards.html](http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/hearing-and-speech/audiology-(aud)/technical-standards.html)