



Technical Standards for Students  
Department of Speech-Language Pathology  
College of Health Care Sciences  
Health Professions Division

**INTRODUCTION**

As part of the College of Health Care Sciences, the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at Nova Southeastern University offers an entry-level Master of Science in the Speech-Language Pathology program. The program focuses on training speech-language pathologists to provide a full range of services to communicatively disordered clients in a variety of settings.

The department has the responsibility of ensuring that the graduates from the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology program have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates for the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology degree must have multiple abilities and skills including communication skills, motor skills, intellectual and cognitive skills, sensory and observation skills, as well as behavioral and social skills in order to successfully complete the program. The technical standards discussed below reflect the applicable sub-set of abilities that are required under each skill.

Moreover, the department is committed to the education of all qualified individuals, including persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodation, are capable of performing the technical standards outlined below. In accordance with federal regulations established by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students and applicants with disabilities, the technical standards have been created in order to assist each candidate/student in evaluating his/her prospect for academic and clinical success. The technical standards detailed below have been adapted from the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders' standards. The standards reflect the reasonable expectations set for speech-language pathology students and clinicians in performing common functions in academic and clinical settings.

Students are required to notify the program of any changes in their ability to perform the essential functions set for speech-language pathology students. Students with disabilities may inquire about reasonable accommodations through the Office of Student Disabilities and in accordance with the provisions of the NSU Student Handbook.

## TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The technical standards outlined below are those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, including clinical education and the development of professional attributes required of all students at graduation. Speech-language pathology students must be able to meet each of these technical standards in order to fully participate in the program and successfully complete the requirements for the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology degree, with or without reasonable accommodation.

### 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, caregivers, and other persons served.\*
- ☞ Communicate professionally and intelligibly with patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- ☞ Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
- ☞ Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

### MOTOR SKILLS

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 including fire, choking, etc.\*
- ☞ Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.\*
- ☞ Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.\*
- ☞ Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
- ☞ 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.)

### INTELLECTUAL / COGNITIVE SKILLS

A student must possess 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.\*
- ☞ 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 patient 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.

### SENSORY / OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

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

- ⌘ Visually and auditorily identify normal and disordered (fluency, articulation, voice, resonance, respiration characteristics, oral and written language in the areas of semantics, pragmatics, syntax, morphology and phonology, swallowing, cognition, social interaction related to communication).
- ⌘ Identify the need to alternative modalities of communication.
- ⌘ Visualize and identify anatomic structures.
- ⌘ Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
- ⌘ Identify and discriminate findings on imaging studies.
- ⌘ Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
- ⌘ Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and or verbal communication.

### 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.\*
- ⌘ 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, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics and university and federal privacy 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.\*
- ⌘ 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.

\* These skills are more inherent and should be present when a student begins the program.

**Speech-language pathology students and applicants who have any questions about the technical standards outlined in this document should contact Mr. Steven Vertz ([svertz@nova.edu](mailto:svertz@nova.edu)), (954) 262-7735.**

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Nova Southeastern University's Office of Student Disabilities:

NSU Main Campus

Rosenthal Student Center

1st Floor, Suite 121

3301 College Ave.

Ft. Lauderdale-Davie, FL 33314

Phone: 954-262-7185

Website: <http://www.nova.edu/disabilityservices/>

ADA Information Line:

Phone: 800-514-0301 (voice)

Phone: 800-514-0383 (TTY)

Website: [www.ada.gov/infoline.htm](http://www.ada.gov/infoline.htm)