

Essential skills and attributes required for the study of Audiology

Ontario Council of University Programs in Rehabilitation Sciences (OCUPRS) Policy Document, July 2009

Introduction

The Ontario university programs in Audiology are responsible to society for providing their enrolled students with opportunities to develop the qualifications (academic knowledge, professional behaviours, attitudes and clinical skills) to enter the profession of Audiology in Ontario. The purpose of this document is to describe the attributes required for success in completing a university program in Audiology. Students interested in pursuing a graduate degree in this discipline are encouraged to review the following document that outlines the requisite attributes to undertake such graduate studies.

An offer of admission to an Audiology program should not be interpreted as evidence that the program has independently verified an applicant's attributes in the domains described below. These skills and abilities are essential if students are to be successful in achieving the competency standards of the profession.

In addition to obtaining a degree in Audiology, an individual must also be registered with the provincial regulatory organization, College of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of Ontario (CASLPO) in order to practice as an Audiologist in Ontario.

It is anticipated that reasonable accommodation may be provided to individuals who demonstrate such requirement on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination. The following description of essential attributes is not intended to preclude individuals who may require reasonable accommodation. Students who anticipate that reasonable accommodation will enable them to meet the required standards for these skills and abilities are responsible for articulating their requirements. Requests for accommodation are considered on a case-by-case basis according to the applicable policies, regulations and procedures. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek out and review the policies, regulations and procedures regarding accommodation at the university (ies) and program(s) to which they are applying. If admitted to a program, students will be required to follow the policies and procedures of the university and faculty/school within which the program is located.

University graduate programs in Audiology in Ontario provide enrolled students with the academic knowledge and entry level clinical skills training, while fostering an environment that nurtures the development of professional behaviours and attitudes necessary for practice within the profession of audiology.

Students must be able to work collaboratively with colleagues, other professionals, clients and families while demonstrating sound clinical and professional judgment and responsible decision within the context of rules and regulations, professional codes of ethics and standards of practice.

As future health care professionals, students are expected to gain entry level competency in assessment and management of hearing and communication disorders with a variety of client populations in a variety of work and community settings within a two year time frame. Given the intensity, breadth and depth of the information and clinical training, students in audiology programs must possess very strong cognitive, communication, sensory, and interpersonal skills necessary for the provision of safe, ethical and effective assessment, treatment, counseling and educational services. Students interested in pursuing a degree in audiology are encouraged to review the following document that further outlines the requisite skills and attributes for the profession.

Upon completion of the program, students obtain a Master's degree within approximately two years of full-time study. Time extensions may be granted under certain conditions. Requests are considered on a case by case basis in accordance with each university's regulations.

Description of the Skills and Attributes for Students in a Master's-level program in Audiology

Aptitude and Attitude

Students seeking to enter an Audiology program must have an interest in the process of human communication, hearing science, hearing loss, and hearing remediation. They must demonstrate sensitivity, compassion, integrity and concern for others. They must be respectful of individuality and diversity, build trusting relationships, demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills to engage and motivate patients and families, demonstrating creative problem solving skills and able to manage multiple, potentially competing demands.

Information gathering skills

Students must be able to participate in learning situations that require skills in observation. In particular, students must be able to accurately observe a patient and acquire relevant (visual and auditory) information. In addition, students must be able to accurately observe, manipulate, and interpret audiological, vestibular, and electro-acoustic equipment.

Communication skills

Students must be able to speak, hear and visually observe patients in order to effectively and efficiently elicit information; describe mood, activity, posture; and perceive non-verbal communication. Examples of activities that require such skills include:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and families and any member of the health care team.

- Coherently summarize a patient's hearing assessment and intervention plan verbally and in text (handwritten or electronically).
- Maintain clear, accurate and appropriate records of patient progress including notes and audiological and vestibular reports which comply with regulatory and organizational documentation standards.

It is important to note that some programs may have specific language requirements to meet the needs of the clinical settings in geographical area.

Critical Thinking skills

Effective problem solving and judgment are necessary to address patient needs, and engage the patient in a safe, effective, and efficient manner. Students must demonstrate the skills necessary to observe, analyze, integrate and synthesize information using relevant models, frameworks and theories of hearing and balance to apply relevant and current scientific knowledge. Students must demonstrate these critical thinking skills in their course work in all learning environments, including the classroom and in clinical and community settings. Students must demonstrate a capacity to participate in research.

Psychomotor/Physical skills

Students must consistently demonstrate sufficient motor function to provide safe, effective and efficient audiological and vestibular service (assessment and intervention) for their patients subject to any reasonable accommodation that may be required. Students must be able to use common assessment and intervention tools/instruments either directly or in an adaptive form. In addition, students are expected to physically be able to participate in all learning experiences of the educational program (e.g., for clinical skills laboratory work).

Emotional Health

Students must consistently demonstrate the emotional health/skills required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities. Students must also be able to tolerate the physical, emotional and mental demands of the program and function effectively under stress. Adaptability to changing environments and the ability to function in the face of uncertainties that are inherent in the care of clients are both necessary.