



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health
Social Care Professionals

Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists

Bord Clárchúcháin na dTeiripeoirí Urlabhartha agus Teanga
Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board

About this Document

CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- › Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes
- › Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes: Information for Education Providers
- › Programme Information Guidelines for Education and Training Providers.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is subject to the Freedom of Information and its records are subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, 2004.

Any personal data received by CORU will be used for the purpose of programme approval and monitoring and shared with those involved in these processes.

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Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- › The **approval** of education and training programmes (Section 48) – this allows a Registration Board to determine if it is satisfied that a programme which applies for approval is suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration in its register.
- › The **monitoring** of approved programmes (Section 49) – this allows a Registration Board to satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of the education, training, assessment and examination, and clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduates for entry on to the register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board.

There are two types of requirements:

- › **Standards of proficiency** are the threshold standards set by the Registration Board for entry to the register. The standards of proficiency provide detail on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.
- › **Criteria for education and training programmes** are the set of requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. These criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed. The criteria are detailed in a separate document called the *Speech and Language Therapists Registration Board Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the Speech and Language Therapists Register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

If a programme is not approved, the associated qualification will not be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes and is conducted not less than once every five years. Qualifications may be removed from the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if the associated programme does not meet the Board's requirements under monitoring. Students graduating from a programme not listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are not eligible to apply for entry to the Speech and Language Therapists Register.

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession
2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional
3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference
4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure
5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care
7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board
8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers
10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given
11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting
12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse
13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation
14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing
15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained
16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity
17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made
18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources
20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing.

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Team working

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user
2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs
3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns
4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate
5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required
6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation
7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession
8. Be able to use and maintain efficient information management systems
9. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements
10. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality
11. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice
12. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management
13. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users
14. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
15. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting
16. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs
2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment
3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests
4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process
5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals
6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments
7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/ outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user
9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews
10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns
11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement
12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines
13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines
14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies.

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development
2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice
3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice
4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately
5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice
6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery.

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological, biomedical and medical sciences, human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing, disease, disorder and dysfunction
3. Demonstrate an understanding of developmental and acquired disorders as relevant to the development and maintenance of speech, language, communication and swallowing
4. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice
5. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice
6. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision
7. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on the practice of speech and language therapy including its application to educational, health and workplace settings and within multi-cultural societies.
8. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills
9. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research
10. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision
11. Demonstrate an understanding of therapeutic contexts, models and processes, relevant to the practice of speech and language therapy
12. Demonstrate an understanding of the critical importance of effective communication skills for all aspects of participation in society and for an individual's quality of life
13. Demonstrate an understanding of and be able to evaluate the potential impact of communication impairment on self-fulfilment and autonomy for a service user
14. Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental role eating, drinking, and swallowing can play in social participation and the potential impact experiencing these impairments may have on health, quality of life and wellbeing
15. Demonstrate an understanding of linguistics, including phonetics, language acquisition, sociolinguistics and all levels of normal speech and language processing and be able to apply this to practice

16. Demonstrate an understanding of relevant domains of psychology, as relevant to lifespan development, normal and impaired communication, psychological and social wellbeing
17. Demonstrate an understanding of educational philosophy and practice and the relationship between language and literacy and be able to apply this to practice
18. Demonstrate an understanding of the current issues and trends in Irish education, social, health and international public policy developments that influence speech and language therapy practice in Ireland
19. Be able to advocate on behalf of persons with speech, language, communication and swallowing impairments to maximise participation in all aspects of society
20. Be able to assess and manage paediatric and adult service users experiencing difficulties with speech, language, communication and/or swallowing
21. Be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 8.0 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 7.5.



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T: 01 2933160 E: info@coru.ie

www.coru.ie