

Speech Therapist Scope of Practice

September 2024

HKIST manages the Register of Accredited Speech Therapists in Hong Kong

Under the Pilot Scheme of the Accredited Registers for Healthcare Professions of Department of Health, HKSAR, Hong Kong Institute of Speech Therapists (HKIST) has been authorized to be the Accredited Registered healthcare profession since 19 April 2018. HKIST is responsible for the regulation of the speech therapy profession and managing the register of speech therapists.

The set up of HKIST aims to ensure public access to speech therapy services provided by qualified speech therapists. The mission of HKIST includes:

1. To safeguard the public interests in accessing speech therapy services;
2. To promote adequate standards of professional practice and of professional conduct among accredited speech therapists; and
3. To maintain and update the register of accredited speech therapists in Hong Kong.

Communication

Including speech production, fluency, language (verbal and non-verbal), cognition, voice, resonance and hearing.

Swallowing

Covering all aspects of swallowing including related feeding behaviours

Purpose

It supports speech therapists in providing high-quality services to individuals with communication or swallowing difficulties and in conducting related research. It also serves to inform other health care professionals, educators, regulators, government agencies and the public about the professional services provided by accredited speech therapists.

The practice of each registered speech therapist is ethically bounded by the “Scope of Practice for Speech Therapy in Hong Kong” and the “Code of Ethics for Speech Therapy in Hong Kong” published by HKIST and be responsible for his/her practice and conduct.

Definition

Speech Therapists are the professionals who specialize in preventing, managing and doing research in communication and swallowing disorders across an individual’s life span. They are ethically bound to perform services that are appropriate to their levels of education, training, competency, skills and proficiency with respect to the roles identified. As technology and science advance, the areas of assessment and intervention related to communication and swallowing disorders evolve and grow accordingly. Continuous professional education should be pursued by a speech therapist in order to expand his or her expertise into novel clinical and technological development of the profession.

**Members of HKIST can use the title of
“Speech Therapist in Accredited Register”**

Educational Requirements

For a speech therapist to practise in Hong Kong, he or she should possess a bachelor’s degree or above in speech therapy in a recognized tertiary institution or equivalent, and should demonstrate competency as specified in Competency Based Occupational Standards (CBOS) 2011 with reference to the supplementary document by Hong Kong Institute of Speech Therapists.

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a speech therapist include the assessment, diagnosis, rehabilitation, and prevention of communication and swallowing disorders resulting from dysfunctions of the oral, laryngeal, resonatory, respiratory, esophageal, or neurological mechanism. The ultimate aim of speech therapy is to improve individuals’ quality of life by optimizing his or her communicative and swallowing abilities with up-to-date, rational, safe and cost-effective management.

Clinical Services

- Screening and identification of communication and swallowing disorders
- Assessment and diagnosis of communication and swallowing disorders
- Intervention for communication and swallowing disorders
- Management of communication and swallowing disorders using instrumental techniques
- Coordination of care with other professionals
- Consultation for individuals and their caregivers
- Measurement of therapy outcomes and documentation of therapy progress

Education and Research

- Participation in professional training programs, research activities, conventions and seminars for continuous professional development
- Providing training and development programs for speech therapy colleagues and other health professionals
- Providing supervision and clinical placement to speech therapy students
- Delivery of talks and organization of educational seminars
- Research in communication, swallowing and other related areas

Administration

- Caseload management and coordination of speech therapy services
- Planning, development, implementation and review of programs, policies and guidelines related to speech therapy service
- Conducting service management activities such as quality improvement initiative and clinical auditing
- Management of staff related to the provision of speech therapy service

Areas of speech therapy service	Practice Settings
Receptive and expressive language	Hospitals
Pragmatics and social skills	Schools
Cognitive communication	Preschool centres
Problem solving	Nursing homes and day care centres
Emergent literacy and literacy	Community rehabilitation centres
Speech sound production	Outreaching services
Fluency	Private practice
Voice	Tertiary institutions
Resonance	Government departments
Feeding and swallowing	
Airway management	
Alternative and augmentative communication	
Aural habilitation/rehabilitation	