

OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARD

Speech and Language Therapist, EstQF Level 8

An occupational standard is a document which describes the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes, i.e. competence requirements, needed to successfully accomplish duties. Occupational standards are used for compiling curricula and awarding qualifications.

Occupational title	Level of Estonian Qualifications Framework (EstQF)
Speech and Language Therapist, EstQF Level 8	8

Part A DESCRIPTION OF WORK

A.1 Description of work <p>A Speech and Language Therapist is a specialist in assessing, developing and/or restoring communication ability and swallowing function and preventing related disorders in clients/patients. They advise and work with patients with communication and/or swallowing difficulties, their family members and other health professionals. They cooperate with patient's relatives and other specialists.</p> <p>The goal of speech therapy is to help patients successfully (re)integrate back into everyday life and to maintain or improve their quality of life.</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapist, Level 8 provides therapy and counselling in more complex cases; they supervise colleagues, students and other specialists, participate in research studies and work to develop new methods.</p> <p>There is also an occupational qualification standard for Speech and Language Therapist, EstQF Level 7.</p>
A.2 Tasks <p>A.2.1 Assessment of communication ability and swallowing function</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the purpose and need for speech therapy. 2. Collecting information in order to develop a plan of action. 3. Selection of assessment methods and tools. 4. Investigating communication ability and swallowing difficulties and changing the level of difficulty of the material or method being used. 5. Determining the need for further diagnostic assessment. <p>A.2.2 Analysis and interpretation of assessment results</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining the characteristics of communication and/or swallowing disorders. 2. Describing the manifestation of communication and/or swallowing disorders. 3. Noting the need for tools to replace or support speech. <p>A.2.3 Planning, conducting and summarising speech therapy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a plan for therapy. 2. Putting the planned actions into order. 3. Conducting therapy. 4. Evaluating the effectiveness of speech therapy <p>A.2.4 Counselling and supervision.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consulting patients/clients, their relatives and other specialists. 2. Advising patients/clients and people in their support network. 3. Offering supervision. 4. Advising speech and language therapists and other professionals. 5. Supervising students.

A.2.5 Academic and research activities.

1. Developing and modifying assessment and therapy methods and tools.
2. Academic activities.
3. Developing the profession.

A.2.6 Training

1. Developing and designing curricula and training courses.
2. Putting together training materials.
3. Carrying out training courses.
4. Grading results and collecting feedback.

Elective areas of work

A.2.7 Management

1. Team management.
2. Project management.

A.3 Work environment and specific nature of work

A Speech and Language Therapist works with children and adults in educational, health care or social facilities or in private practice. Work should be carried out in a specialised room that enables the therapist to work with people of different ages and needs individually or in groups.

A.4 Tools

Object-based, pictorial, textual, info-technological and instrumental assessment and therapy tools.

A.5 Personal qualities required for work: abilities and characteristics

The work of a speech therapist requires good cooperation and communication skills, analytical thinking, stress and general tolerance, continuous self-improvement, empathy, patience, creativity and flexibility.

A.6 Professional preparation

A Speech and Language Therapist, Level 8 has a specialised Master's degree in addition to work experience.

A.7 Most common occupational titles

Speech and language therapist.

Part B **COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS**

B.1 Structure of occupation

Mandatory competences B.2.1-B.2.6 and recurring competence B.2.8 must be certified when applying for the qualification of Speech and Language Therapist, Level 8. In addition, elective competence B.2.7 may also be certified.

The prerequisite for receiving occupational qualification for Speech and Language Therapist, Level 8 is being proficient in at least one the these areas:

- performing speech therapy for swallowing difficulties;
- performing speech therapy for voice disorders;
- performing speech therapy for speech motor disorders (dysarthria or apraxia of speech);
- performing speech therapy for speech disorders caused by pathological anatomy of the head and neck;
- performing speech therapy for communication difficulties caused by cognitive, psychological or behaviour disorders;
- performing speech therapy for communication disorders caused by vision and/or hearing loss;
- performing speech therapy for speech fluency disorders;
- performing speech therapy for developmental speech and language disorders;
- performing speech therapy for written speech disorders;
- performing speech therapy for aphasia.

B.2 Competences

MANDATORY COMPETENCES

B.2.1 Assessment of communication ability and swallowing function	EstQF Level 8
Performance indicators: 1. Identifies the reason for the client's/patient's referral and need for intervention based on their medical history; 2. Collects information from the client/patient, their family members and other professionals using observation, questioning and existing documentation; 3. Selects and adapts the assessment methods and tools to the difficulties faced by the patient/client, their age and the goal of the assessment; carries out or participates in instrumental diagnostics of voice and swallowing function; 4. Evaluates communication ability and swallowing difficulties using up-to-date assessment methods and tools; adjusts the level of difficulty of the material or method used if necessary; provides treatment and evaluates its effectiveness; 5. Evaluates whether the collected information is sufficient to make a diagnosis or set goals for speech therapy; notes the need for further diagnostic assessment and refers the client/patient to other specialists or to the relevant specialist speech and language therapist for further assessment.	
B.2.2 Analysis and interpretation of assessment results	EstQF Level 7
Performance indicators: 1. Defines the characteristics of communication or swallowing disorders and analyses the relationship and causal links between them. 2. Summarises the manifestation of communication and/or swallowing disorders, makes a diagnosis and determines the severity and form of the disorder. 3. Notes the need for tools to substitute or support speech and chooses appropriate alternative means of communication.	
B.2.3 Planning, carrying out and summarising speech therapy	EstQF Level 7
Performance indicators: 1. Puts together a therapy plan taking into account the client's/patient's diagnosis, abilities, needs, disease severity and environment; determines the length, intensity and form of the therapy needed (individual and/or group). 2. Organises work with clients/patients based on the risk to the client's/patient's health and well-being, their needs, care plan and other factors. 3. Bases speech therapy on evidence-based methodology and recognised best practice guidelines; evaluates the suitability of chosen methods during therapy and modifies the therapy plan if needed. 4. Evaluates and summarises the results of speech therapy, informs clients/patients and their relatives and cooperates with them to plan further action.	
B.2.4 Counselling and supervision	EstQF Level 8
Performance indicators: 1. Explains to the clients/patients, the people in their support network and other specialists the cause, manifestation, effect on quality of life and options for intervention of communication and/or swallowing difficulties; 2. Advises clients/patients, the people in their support network and other specialists on how to develop a good environment for communication, choosing appropriate means of communication, creating optimal conditions for safe eating and swallowing, in the choice of speech therapy, in setting goals for the therapy and also during the therapy process; 3. Supervises the communication partners of the patient/client (including the medical team, teachers and caregivers) in the appropriate use of communication techniques (including AAC) in daily situations; 4. Consults other speech therapists in their area of specialisation on complex cases; 5. Supervises the research projects and practical training of speech and language therapy students.	
B.2.5 Academic and research activities	EstQF Level 8
Performance indicators: 1. Develops and modifies assessment and therapy methods and tools; 2. Publishes related scientific articles and gives presentations at conferences; participates in research projects; supervises and reviews scientific or practical research studies; 3. Promotes speech and language therapy by publishing articles in or speaking to the media; cooperates with educational and scientific institutions; contributes to policy decision-making affecting the field and to the promotion	

of the system of speech therapy assistance by participating in respective working groups and committees and proposing amendments/additions to laws or other documents regulating the speciality.

B.2.6 Training

EstQF Level 7

Performance indicators:

1. Analyses the learning needs of the training group, guided by developments in the field and the theoretical basis for analysing training needs; formulates the aim and learning outcomes of the training and compiles curricula taking into account the scientific principles of teaching and learning needs of the training group;
2. Produces training materials based on the chosen training methods, target group and training objectives, drawing on relevant sources;
3. Conducts courses, lectures, seminars, workshops, e-learning courses and other training based on the theories and methods of speech and language therapy; develops a mental, social and physical environment that promotes learning; guides the learning process based on the curriculum, the needs of the target group and students' individual learning outcomes;
4. Collects feedback on the learning process, analyses learning outcomes and plans further activities.

OPTIONAL COMPETENCES

B.2.7 Management

EstQF Level 7

Performance indicators:

1. Manages teamwork by setting goals and motivating and involving team members;
2. Manages professional projects.

RECURRING COMPETENCES

B.2.8 Recurring competences of Speech and Language Therapist

EstQF Level 7

Performance indicators:

1. Follows the principles of professional ethics of speech and language therapists in their work.
2. Complies with legislation.
3. Documents their actions (course of assessment, results, evaluations, therapy plans and summaries) using the correct terminology and language.
4. Adopts different communication tactics in their work; adapts communication to the situation and to the needs of the client/patient.
5. Integrates and combines professional terminology and methods depending on the situation;
6. Participates in teamwork.
7. Follows occupational safety and hygiene requirements.
8. Is up to date on current scientific literature in the field and is aware of the results of research studies.
9. Is fluent in their native language at the C2 level, including pronunciation; has a command of the official language at the B2 level and at least one foreign language at the B1 level (see Annex 1).
10. Uses the necessary information technology tools and specialist databases; finds reliable information on the Internet using various strategies (e.g. using different search engines and databases) and evaluates the validity and reliability of the information using different criteria.

Assessment method(s):

Recurring competences are assessed as part of the assessment of the other competences listed in the occupational standard.

Part C GENERAL INFORMATION AND ANNEXES

C.1 Information concerning compilation and certification of occupational qualification standard and reference to classification of occupations

1. ID of occupational qualification standard in register of occupational qualifications	23-25042024-3.2/12k
2. Occupational qualification standard compiled by:	Linnu-Lydia Mae, Tallinna Tondi Põhikool Birgit Kaasik, SA Tallinna Lastehaigla Marika Padrik, Tartu Ülikool Anne Uriko, SA Tartu Ülikooli Kliinikum Siiri Kliss, Eesti Logopeedide Ühing Maret Jahu, SA Tallinna Lastehaigla Ülle Lillipuu, Tallinna Laagna Lasteaed-Põhikool
3. Occupational qualification standard approved by:	Health
4. No. of decision of Sectoral Council	15
5. Date of decision of Sectoral Council	25.04.2024
6. Occupational qualification standard valid until	24.04.2027
7. Occupational qualification standard version no.	12
8. Reference to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08)	2266 Audiologists and Speech Therapists
9. Reference to European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	8
C.2 Occupational title in foreign language	
English:	Speech and Language Therapist, EstQF Level 8
English:	speech pathologist
Finnish:	puheterapeutti
French:	ortophoniste, logopède
German:	Spracheilpädagoge, Logopäde
Russian:	логопед
C.3 Annexes	
Lisa 1 Language skills level descriptions	