

M.A IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Program Policy Statement

Updated: October 2020

Program History

A. Mission Statement

The mission of the M.A. program in Speech-Language Pathology is to prepare speech-language pathologists who: a) use a systematic and logical approach in their assessment and treatment of individuals with communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan; b) base their decision making on research evidence; client values and beliefs, clinical expertise, ethical standards, and the constraints of the clinical setting; and c) possess the skills to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

Through academic coursework and clinical experiences across a variety of settings, students will master the professional knowledge and skills needed to assess, diagnose, treat, and help prevent disorders related to speech, language, literacy, cognitive functioning, voice, swallowing, and fluency. Students will acquire and demonstrate knowledge of basic human communication and swallowing processes, including their biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural bases. They will acquire and demonstrate knowledge of the nature of speech, language, hearing, and communication disorders and differences, as well as swallowing disorders, including etiologies, characteristics, and anatomical/physiological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural correlates for people with communication and swallowing disorders across the life span. The program will also allow students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge in standards of ethical conduct, research principles in evidence-based clinical practice, and contemporary professional issues.

B. Origin of the Program

In 2008, at the request of representatives from the State including Governor Ruth Ann Minner and State Representative Valerie Longhurst, a task force was created to examine issues surrounding the shortage of licensed speech-language pathologists in the state of Delaware and to develop recommendations to address the shortage. The task force endorsed a variety of tactics including the development of an in-state training program. (The master's degree is the entry-level degree for practice in speech-language pathology).

In 2011, a working group was created to study the implementation of a master's degree program in speech-language pathology at the University of Delaware while exploring the possibilities of various partnerships between Delaware Technical and Community College, Delaware State University, and the Delaware Health Science Alliance. Members of the working group included JJ Davis, Vice President for Finance and Administration University of Delaware; Dr. Kathleen Matt, Dean of the College of Health Sciences at the University of Delaware; Dr. Beth Mineo, University of Delaware; Dr. Linda Vallino,

Nemours; Dr. Janice Burk, Thomas Jefferson University; Dr. June Turansky, Delaware Technical and Community College; Dr. Abdul Diop, Delaware State University; State Representative Valerie Longhurst; Lieutenant Governor Matthew Denn; and Mike Barlow, Chief Legal Counsel to the Governor.

During the summer 2012 the Governor's Office provided Dean Matt with \$200,000 to support the planning of this degree program. In August 2012, an organizational meeting was held to inform key University administrators about this initiative and secure institutional support for moving forward. Attendees included Interim Provost Brickhouse, Vice President for Administration and Services Davis, Dean Matt, Okagaki, and Watson, CHS Associate Dean for Research Flynn, CHS Deputy Dean Hall, and Professor Mineo. Dean Matt explained that the state was interested in providing financial assistance for initiating such a program but wished assurance that the University was prepared to embrace and support the program once established. Specifically, the state wanted to know that a curriculum for the proposed program had University approval. Dean Matt explained that the state was interested in providing financial assistance for initiating such a program but wished to be assured that the University was prepared to embrace and support the program once established. Specifically, the state wanted to know that a curriculum for the proposed program had University approval. Hall and Mineo, with the assistance of outside consultants from other institutions with established speech-language pathology programs developed the requisite documents for proposing this new M.A. program. With considerable input from these content experts, Hall and Mineo developed the Program Policy Statement, Senate Resolution, and Academic Approval form for the proposed degree program. The proposal was approved by the CHS Curriculum Committee on January 14, 2013.

The University Faculty Senate approved the curriculum for the proposed program at its meeting of April 8, 2013. On October 7, 2013, the Faculty Senate approved a five-year provisional status for an M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology. In order to reflect the nomenclature used by the majority of programs in the country, the name of the program housing the M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology was officially changed from Speech-Language Pathology to Communication Sciences and Disorders on March 2, 2015. No change was made to the name of the M.A. degree. The M.A. program in Speech-Language Pathology received permanent status in May 2020. In addition, the program is presently housed in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders; previously a program within CHS. On February 5, 2018 the PhD in Communication Sciences and Disorders was approved by the Faculty Senate.

In July 2014, Dr. Aquiles Iglesias was hired as the Founding Director of the program. The accreditation application was submitted to the Council on Academic Accreditation in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (CAA) on March 22, 2015, site visit occurred in Dec 2015, and Accreditation Candidacy status was awarded in February 2016. Candidacy status is awarded to any newly developed entry-level graduate degree

program that meets all institutional and programmatic eligibility requirements. No students can be accepted into a program until this status is achieved. Candidacy status may be held for no longer than 5 years, subject to approval of the annual progress reports, at which time the program must meet all CAA Standards for Accreditation. The program submitted their application for full accreditation in 2019 and received full accreditation in February 2020.

The first class enrolled in the fall of 2016. In May 2018, the first cohort of students graduated. Since its inception, the program has accepted five cohorts and will be accepting its sixth cohort in the spring of 2021.

C. Description of the Planning Process

During Fall 2012 CHS Deputy Dean Hall and Professor Mineo held oncampus meetings with professors from other institutions with established graduate programs in speech-language pathology. These outside consultants included Professors Glen Tellis from Misericordia University, Michael Flahive from St. Xavier University, and Judy Vander Woude from Calvin College. With considerable input from these content experts, Hall and Mineo developed the Program Policy Statement, Senate resolution, and Academic Approval form for the proposed degree program. The proposal was approved by the College Curriculum Committee. During this process, they also met with Assistant Provost Mary Martin to solicit her review and suggestions for the proposal. A review and support of the proposal from the College of Education and Human Development and the Department of Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences was received.

D. Current Status and Funding

After receiving Candidacy status from the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology and Audiology, the program accepted its first cohort (26 students). The program has accepted a total of five cohorts (26, 23, 26, 27, and 22 students), graduated three cohorts (spring 2018, 2019, 2020), has hired a Founding Director, 10 faculty members, the Director of Clinical Education, and the Director of Research and Clinical Services. In addition, the UD Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic was opened in 2015 and hired 20 part-time and two full-time speech-language pathologists who serve as clinical supervisors for the M.A. students. The State of Delaware has supported program development through a State Special Line funding. In addition to tuition generated by the program, several faculty members have received federal funding that supports their work. The UD Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic is self-supporting.

E. Degree Offered and Nature of the Program

The degree awarded to those who successfully complete this program is a master's degree (M.A.) in Speech-language Pathology. The courses in the program are all clinical in nature and are specifically designed to prepare practitioners of speech-language pathology for clinical practice. The courses are therefore open only to students matriculated in the program. Students successfully completing the program are eligible for certification as speech-language pathologists from the American Speech-Language-

Hearing Association (ASHA) and licensure as speech-language pathologist in the State of Delaware and other states where licensure is equivalent to ASHA certification requirements. The website listing the requirements for ASHA certification and Delaware licensure may be found here:

ASHA (<https://www.asha.org/certification/>); Delaware (<https://dpr.delaware.gov/boards/speechaudio/>)

F. Expected Student Demand and Enrollments

According to the current website for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/speech-language-pathologists.htm>), employment of speech-language pathologists is expected to grow by 18 percent between 2016 and 2026, faster than the average for all occupations.

As the large baby-boom population grows older, there will be more instances of speech or language impairments, such as strokes, brain injuries, and hearing loss. This will result in increased demand for speech-language pathologists. The demand for speech-language pathologists has also grown in part because of improvements in diagnosis of speech and language impairments.

There is a high demand for M.A. graduates in speech-language pathology. This is a growing field and vacancies exist throughout the country. The lack of manpower to fill job openings in Delaware is one of the reasons the program was established and financially supported by the State of Delaware. Many of the graduate students receive multiple offers prior to graduation, with some students receiving scholarships or loan forgiveness awards during their program if they commit to work for specific agencies or, in the case of loan forgiveness, in Early Intervention Programs or school district in Delaware. All 73 graduates are presently employed, with the majority having signed contracts one month after graduation.

Year	No. of Applicants	Offers	Matriculated	Graduated	Dropped Out
2016	284	61	26		0
2017	299	78	23		0
2018	235	91	26	26	0
2019	244	72	27	22	1
2020	218	68	22	25	1

Part II. Admission

A. University Policy on Admission

Admission to this graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer appropriate strengths.

B. University Admission Procedures

Admission to the graduate program is made by the faculty of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders program (CSCD), whose members independently evaluate each applicant's credentials and collectively decide on admissions and financial assistance. Judgment of the applicant's overall potential for successful graduate study is based on:

- A careful review of the individual's past academic performance, which involves the consideration of grade-point-average (GPA) and the pattern of grades in various subject areas;
- Nature of previous undergraduate or graduate work and the institution at which it was taken;
- Scores on the General Aptitude Test of the Graduate Record Examination;
- Letters of recommendation; and
- Two personal essay.

Applying for the Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology is a two-step process. The Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at the University of Delaware participates in the CSD Centralized Application Service (CSDCAS). All applicants are required to apply online through CSDCAS. Once the CSDCAS application is completed (application is e-submitted, all required transcripts and/or required foreign transcript evaluation(s) and payment have been received), applicants receive notification from the UD Graduate College to complete a brief university application.

Items to submit directly to CSDCAS:

1. Application with application fee
2. Official transcripts
3. Recommendation letters
4. Personal essays
5. GRE score report (UD CSDCAS program code: 7459)

All materials should arrive at CSDCAS at least four weeks prior to the February 1 deadline to allow for timely processing and verification.

Items to submit directly to University of Delaware:

UD Graduate College application and fee (only to be completed after notified by the UD Graduate College). It is not necessary to submit any additional documents to the University of Delaware since they are in CSDCAS. Any coursework and subsequent transcripts that become available after the file has been verified and released to the program by CSDCAS must be submitted directly to the CSCD at the University of Delaware.

C. Expected Minimum Requirements for Admission into the Speech-Language Pathology Program

Admission decisions are made by the Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty. Students will be admitted to the program based on program openings and the student's ability to meet the following recommended entrance requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- GRE scores of at least 151 on quantitative reasoning and at least 151 on verbal reasoning
- An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.3
- Written statement of goals and objectives (the personal statement) that clearly identifies the applicant's professional interests and explains how admission to the program will facilitate his/her professional objectives
- A satisfactory federal criminal background check (a record including a felony will preclude admission)
- Demonstration of essential functions required for admission by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association including the ability to:
 - communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language, and
 - comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands, and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands, and
- A current résumé and three letters of recommendation.

D. Admission Application Processing

Applications will be available, through CSDCAS, on September 1 of each year. All applications are reviewed after the deadline of February 1. Students must also complete a UD application.

The admission process is completed as follows: Completed applications consisting of the application form, undergraduate/graduate transcripts, official GRE scores, letters of recommendation, resume, and answer to two essay questions are reviewed by the CSCD Admissions Committee. The committee arrives at an admission decision after reviewing the completed application.

E. Admission Status

Students admitted to the Speech-Language Pathology Program may be admitted in one of two categories:

1. Regular status is offered to students who have completed all of the prerequisite courses for the program and demonstrate the ability, interest, and maturity necessary for successful study in a graduate level program.
2. Provisional status is offered to students who are in the process of completing all of their pre-requisites. Students must have completed all

pre-requisite courses prior to matriculating in the graduate program (To be modified if proposed post-bac coursework is accepted by Faculty Senate in 2021).

Part III. Degree Requirements for the Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology

A. Program Prerequisites

Degree

Applicants must have completed a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited institution of higher education prior to matriculation. Although applicants with any undergraduate major may apply, only students who have completed all of the program prerequisites can be accepted as regular graduate students. (To be modified if proposed post-bac coursework is accepted by Faculty Senate in 2021).

Prerequisite Coursework

Applicants are required to complete both the prerequisite course required for certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and those required by the University of Delaware Speech-Language Pathology program before starting the M.A. program in Speech-Language Pathology.

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Prerequisites for certification

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association mandates certain additional course work for certification in speech-language pathology. These courses are not requirements or prerequisites for the M.A. program, but they are required for the Certificate of Clinical Competence and thus for entry into the profession. The requirement may be satisfied by the completion of one full-semester undergraduate course in each of four areas. These courses must be taken outside a department granting degrees in speech-language-hearing. Advanced placement courses taken in high school also count, as does successful performance on the CLEP examination. The four required areas are biological science (e.g., biology, human anatomy and physiology, and human genetics), physical science (physics or chemistry), behavioral and social sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology, and anthropology), and statistics (Stand-alone course in statistics. Research methodology courses in communication sciences and disorders cannot be used to satisfy the statistics requirement). Most undergraduate university students have this background, but students should consult their advisor to make sure you have taken courses in all 4 areas.

- University of Delaware – M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology Prerequisites

Listed below are the prerequisite courses for the University of Delaware's Master's Degree Program in Speech-Language Pathology. Completion of the program prerequisite courses with a grade of B or better is required. Note that the exact title of these courses can vary across different programs. UD SLP program prerequisite courses are offered through the Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences department at the University of Delaware, other university with undergraduate speech-language pathology degrees or post-bac programs. If the applicants' undergraduate major is in speech-language-hearing or communication disorders, it is highly likely that most or all of these prerequisites have already been fulfilled. Majors or minors in cognate fields such as psychology and linguistics also typically include some of this content, often distributed differently. No matter what the background, however, it is the applicants' responsibility to demonstrate that these prerequisites have been fulfilled:

- Phonetics and Phonology
- Speech Science
- Speech-Language Development
- Clinical Principles for Management of CSD
- Intro to Audiology

Applicants should also have completed or be in the process of completing the required 25 hours of clinical observation that have been signed by an ASHA certified Speech-Language Pathologist.

B. Program Requirements

The Communication Sciences and Disorders program provides academic and clinical training commensurate with the Masters in Speech-Language Pathology degree. This entry-level degree program provides students the necessary coursework and practicum experiences to apply for certification in speech-language pathology (CCC-SLP) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Graduates are also eligible to apply for licensure as a speech-language pathologist in Delaware. The UD CSCD program is full-time and of two years duration, including two winter sessions and one summer session. Part-time matriculation is not permitted; exceptions can be made at the request of the student's advisor and approved by the faculty.

The curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive balance of academic and clinical experiences that addresses all KASA 2014 requirements and ASHA standards for professional certification. The curriculum encourages students to explore professional scholarship whether through clinical work, classroom assignments, or independent research. The thesis option provides additional training in a research experience for students interested in pursuing doctoral study. Students who enter the program with all pre-requisite courses should complete the program in 18 months (4 academic semesters, one summer and one winter sessions). Students who select to do a thesis may lengthen their program of study by one semester. (To be modified if Post-bac coursework is accepted: Students who enter as admitted post-bacs will complete the program in 21 months-4 academic semesters, 2 summer sessions, and 1 winter session).

Requirements	Credits
Minimum required academic credits	44
Minimum required practicum/clinical credits	16
TOTAL	60

Students are required to successfully complete the required coursework with a GPA of 3.00 and to acquire a minimum of 375 documented clinical practicum hours. (CSCD website lists clinical sites presently available for clinical training of students in the MA program.

Academic and Clinical Courses in Speech-Language Pathology	Credits
CSCD 610 Foundations of Clinical Practice I	2
CSCD 611 Language Disorders in Children (0-5)	3
CSCD 612 Neurogenic Disorders of Language: Foundations	3
CSCD 613 Articulation Disorders	3
CSCD 615 Cultural Humility in Clinical Practice	2
CSCD 621 Fluency Disorders	2
CSCD 622 Language Disorders in Children- School Age	3
CSCD 623 Neurogenic Disorders of Language: Management	3
CSCD 624 Dysphagia	1
CSCD 625 Voice and Resonance Disorders	3
CSCD 626 Alternative and Augmentative Communication	2
CSCD 627 Communication in Autism Spectrum Disorders	1
CSCD 628 Aural Rehabilitation	2
CSCD 650 Clinical Practicum Seminar	0
CSCD 651 Clinical Practicum	1-2-3
CSCD 665 Counseling Skills in SLP	1
CSCD 667 Seminar: Clinical Rounds	1
CSCD 710 Foundations of Clinical Practice III	3
CSCD 711 Neurogenic Disorders of Speech	2

CSCD 713	Seminar: Management of Individuals with Voice and Resonance Disorders (Cleft Palate)	1
CSCD 713	Seminar: Inter-Professional Practice I (Pediatric Feeding)	1
CSCD 713	Seminar: Management of Voice and Resonance Disorders	1
CSCD 713	Seminar: Management of Individuals with Language Disorders	1
CSCD 713	Seminar: Complex Cases I (Medical Aspects)	1
CSCD 750	Advanced Practicum Seminar	0
CSCD 751	Advanced Clinical Practicum	4
CSCD 790	Comprehensive Academic-Clinical Project	1
CSCD 866	Independent Study	1-3
CSCD 869	Thesis	3

At the completion of the program, students are expected to demonstrate the following essential functions required for clinical certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Essential functions can be described in relation to five areas: motor, sensory, communication, intellectual/cognitive (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis), behavioral/emotional, and the professional aspects of the performance of an SLP profession. Each essential function is listed below.

A. Communication

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

1. Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language. Students who do not speak English as their first language will demonstrate proficiency in oral and written language by earning the minimum required official score on the International Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the PSU Institutional TOEFL, or the International English Language testing System (IELTS) exam. Students will demonstrate oral language proficiency by passing an oral screening administered as part of the Clinic Orientation.
2. Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
3. Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.
4. Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.
5. Communicate professionally and intelligibly with patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals and community professional groups.
6. Communicate professionally and effectively on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
7. Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

B. Motor

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

1. Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities.
2. Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations including fire, choking, etc.
3. Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.
4. Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.
5. Efficiently manipulate testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
6. Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc.) in a safe manner.
7. Access technology for clinical management (i.e. billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.)

C. Intellectual/Cognitive

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

1. Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands. Adequate skills in this area will be determined by review of the student's academic record as presented in their graduate application through academic transcripts, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, and a written statement.
2. Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
3. Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgements in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation.
4. 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.
5. Utilize detailed written and verbal instruction in order to make unique and dependent decisions.

D. Sensory/Observation

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

1. 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, hearing and balance disorders, swallowing cognition, social interaction related to communication).
2. Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
3. Visualize and identify anatomic structures.
4. Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
5. Identify and discriminate finding on imaging studies.

6. Discriminate text, numbers, table, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
7. Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and or verbal communication.
8. Identify and discriminate a client's spoken responses.
9. Accurately monitor through both visual and auditory modalities, equipment displays and controls, including those of hearing instruments, used for assessment and treatment of patients.

E. Behavioral/Social

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

1. Display mature, empathetic, and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.
2. Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, gender, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA code of Ethics and University and Federal Privacy Policies.
4. 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.
5. Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health).
6. Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.
7. Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modification of behaviors.
8. Dress appropriately and professionally.

C. Planned Program of Study and Revisions

All students follow the same plan of study, with the exception of students completing a Master's thesis (or if post-bac coursework is accepted by Faculty Senate). Students completing a Master's thesis will enroll in CSCD 869 during their last two semester of the program. It should be noted that students who select a thesis option may extend their studies by one semester. A typical plan for the program of study is shown below.

YEAR 1 FALL	
CSCD 610 Foundations of Clinical Practice I	2
CSCD 611 Language Disorders in Children (0-5)	3
CSCD 612 Neurogenic Disorders of Language: Foundations	3

CSCD 613 Speech Disorders	3
CSCD 615 Cultural Humility in Clinical Practice	2
CSCD 627 Communication in Autism Spectrum Disorders	1
CSCD 651 Clinical Practicum	1
TOTAL	15

YEAR 1 WINTER

CSCD 620 Foundations of Clinical Practice II	2
CSCD 667 Clinical Rounds	1
CSCD 651 Clinical Practicum	2
TOTAL	5

YEAR 1 SPRING

CSCD 622 Language Disorders in Children- School Age	3
CSCD 623 Neurogenic Disorders of Language: Management	3
CSCD 621 Fluency Disorders	2
CSCD 625 Voice and Resonance Disorders	3
CSCD 651 Clinical Practicum	2
CSCD 711 Neurological Disorders of Speech	2
TOTAL	15

YEAR 1 SUMMER

CSCD 624 Dysphagia	2
CSCD 626 Alternative and Augmentative Communication	2
CSCD 651 Clinical Practicum	3
TOTAL	7

YEAR 2 FALL

CSCD 665 Counseling in Speech-Language Pathology	1
CSCD 710 Foundations of Clinical Practice III	2

CSCD 713 Seminar: Management of Individuals with Voice and Resonance Disorders (Cleft Palate)	1
CSCD 713 Special Topics: Child Language	1
CSCD 751 Advanced Clinical Practicum	4
TOTAL	9
YEAR 2 SPRING	
CSCD 628 Aural Rehabilitation	2
CSCD 713 Seminar: Inter-Professional Practice I (Pediatric Feeding)	1
CSCD 713 Seminar: Complex Cases I (Medical Aspects)	1
CSCD 751 Advanced Clinical Practicum	4
CSCD 790 Comprehensive Academic-Clinical Project	1
TOTAL	9
TOTAL - ALL COURSEWORK	60

D. Thesis Option

A thesis is a research study of publishable quality in which the student demonstrates a strong knowledge base, research capacity, creativity, and analytic/writing skills. The thesis option is suggested for students who have maintained a GPA of at least 3.50 and are interested in pursuing doctoral-level study.

A student interested in exploring the thesis option must meet with the faculty member whose expertise is in the area of investigation. The student will work with the faculty member to review the literature in the chosen area and develop the research proposal. All thesis track students must enroll in CSCD 869 in the fall and spring semesters of their second year.

Students who pursue a thesis are responsible, in consultation with their faculty advisor, to select a total of three faculty members (including the thesis chair) who will agree to serve as the Thesis Committee. The final copies of the thesis, including signatures of the department chair and Dean, must be submitted at least three weeks before the end of the semester that the student expects to graduate.

E. Praxis Exam

The Praxis Exam is required for ASHA certification. All students are strongly encouraged, but not required, to take the Praxis II: Speech-Language Pathology Test prior to graduation. Students are advised not to take the test prior to the spring semester of their second year of the program.

F. Faculty Advisors

Upon admissions to the program, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor by the program director. Responsibilities of the faculty advisor include:

- Monitoring student progress in the program, and
- Working with the student to select a thesis committee and coordinate the thesis defense.

If, during the course of a student's academic program, the advisor is unable or unwilling to continue as an advisor, the Department Chair will immediately assign the student another advisor.

G. Requirements for Satisfactory Progress towards the Degree**1. Time Limit for Completing the Degree.**

The time limit for completing of degree requirements begins with the date of matriculation and is specifically detailed in the student's letter of admission. Students entering the program are given two years to complete the program requirements. An extension of time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student's advisor and the chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders department.

2. Submission of Required University Forms.

To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an "Application for Advanced Degree" to the Graduate College. The application deadlines are February 15 for spring candidates, January 15 for winter candidates, May 15 for summer candidates, and September 15 for fall candidates. The application must be signed by the candidate's adviser and the program director. There is an application fee of for master's degree candidates that is published by the university. Payment is required when the application is submitted. Upon completion of the audit, the Graduate College notifies students in writing when they have met all degree requirements.

3. Grade Requirements for Satisfactory Progress.

Failure to satisfactorily progress in the program will be based on the University Graduate Policy as noted below:

The Graduate College monitors the academic progress of all graduate students and notifies students in writing of all academic deficiencies. The cumulative GPA after each semester determines academic standing.

The University's Academic Probation Policy is as follows:

If student is on:	And earns a GPA of:	And earns a GPA of:
Any Status	3.0 or above	Clear
Clear	2.99 – 2.5	Warning
Clear	2.49 – 2.0	Probation
Probation	Below 3.0	Dismissal
Warning	Below 3.0	Probation
Any Status	Below 2.0	Dismissal

4. Reasons for Dismissal from the Program.

The Graduate College notifies students when they are dismissed from graduate programs without completing a degree. Dismissals usually take place at the end of a term. Students may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- Upon the expiration of the five-year time limit.
- Upon the failure to meet the grade point average requirements as stated in the policy on Academic Deficiency and Probation.
- Upon written notice to the Graduate College of voluntary withdrawal from the program.
- Upon the failure to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 upon the completion of the stated number of required credits for a degree.
- Upon the failure to meet the required GPA for graduate student status.
- Upon the determination by the faculty of the student's department that the student has failed to meet or has failed to make satisfactory progress towards meeting academic standards required of the student's program other than the failure to achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 upon the completion of the stated number of required credits for a degree. Students may obtain a B- or below in up to 2 courses. Receiving a grade of B- or below in a third course will result in recommendation for dismissal from the program. Courses in which less than B- is obtained may not count for KASA standards. The student must work with the instructor and the graduate program director to develop a remediation plan, which may include completing alternative assignments and activities to demonstrate competency or retaking the course and obtaining a grade of B- or better. Grades will not be changed as a result of a remediation plan.

In the case of recommendation for dismissal, the program director is required to send a report to the Graduate College that states the faculty vote

on the decision causing dismissal and the justification for this action. The Graduate College will notify the student in writing when the student is dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress in the program. Upon violation of University of Delaware regulations regarding academic honesty. All graduate students are subject to University of Delaware regulations academic honesty. Violations of these regulations or other forms of gross misconduct may result in immediate dismissal from the Program.

5. Procedures for Student Appeals.

Students who receive what they perceive as an unfairevaluation by a faculty member or faculty committee may file [grievances](#) in accordance with University of Delaware policies. Students are encouraged to contact the faculty advisor and then the department chair prior to filing and formal grievance in an effort to resolve the situation informally.

In the case of academic dismissal, the student may appeal the termination by writing to the GraduateCollege. This appeal must be made within ten class days from the date on which the student has been notified of academic dismissal. If the Vice Dean of the Graduate College grants reinstatement, the student must meet conditions of the reinstatement. Failure to meet these conditions will result in dismissal from the program.

Students wishing to review their program file must submit a written request to the department chair at least 24 hours in advance. Students must review the file in the presence of program staff or faculty and are not permitted to remove a file but may photocopy documents from their folder. All access to student records is in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

6. Laboratory Safety and Research Regulations and Standards of Student Conduct.

Graduate students performing laboratory research are subject to all University regulations regarding safety, human subjects, animal use, and hazardous and radio active material use and disposal. These guidelines may be found in the University of Delaware Policies and Procedures Manual. Additional information can be obtained from the University's Research Office website: <http://www.udel.edu/research/>. All training and regulatory authorizations must be updated at the time of thesis proposal submission.

Part IV. Financial Aid and Assistantships

A. Financial Awards

1. Types of Awards, policy for granting financial awards, summer appointments, and number of years of support

The majority of students in the program receive some form of financial assistance. The students receive a tuition remission scholarship through the CSCD program. This merit-based support ranges from \$35,000 to \$60,000 for the two-year program. In addition, some of the students receive traineeship funding through LEND (College of Education). This traineeship pays partial tuition and a stipend. Students who are interested in working in the schools in Delaware can also participate in a loan forgiveness program (Speech/language Pathologist Incentive Program) that has been established through the Office of Higher Education, Delaware Department of Education. The program requires students to commit to working in the Delaware schools for 2 years after graduation.

Students can also apply for internal funding. For example, students can apply for any of the appropriate competitive awards offered through the Graduate College.

2. Responsibilities and Evaluation of Students on Assistantships

Students must maintain full-time status while funded by an assistantship or fellowship. Students funded as RAs are expected to devote 20 hours per week to research work, as directed by the faculty member providing funding. Continuation of an RA position is contingent on satisfactory work, satisfactory progress toward the degree, and availability of funding.

Part V. Program Governance

A. Communication Sciences and Disorders Faculty

1. The Communication Sciences and Disorders Faculty consists of all members of the Communication Sciences and Disorders tenure and tenure-track faculty, Master Clinicians involved in clinical practicum, adjunct faculty members and faculty members with joint appointments. Faculty from across the university and its affiliates, who have training and interest in the broad field of Speech-Language Pathology may affiliate with the program by expressing interest and submitting a CV for review by existing department faculty. Only tenure-track faculty members in the Communication Sciences and Disorders department are responsible for the oversight of program policies and curriculum.

2. Department Chair. The College of Health Sciences dean will appoint a chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders program who will serve as the director of the M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology Program. The term of service for the program director is five years, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms that might be served.

The program director serves as the program representative and point person responsible for the following: Corresponding with prospective students,

- Maintaining program records,
- Chairing Program Committee meetings,
- Admitting students to the program following approval of the Program

Committee,

- Assigning faculty advisors to students upon admission to the program,
- Chairing meetings of the Speech-Language Pathology faculty as necessary for review/revision of program policies and curriculum, and
- Final approval of degree granting.

B. Speech-Language Pathology Students

Student Organization. The university has a chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA). This is a pre-professional membership association for students interested in the study of communication sciences and disorders.

[National membership](#) is available to undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral students enrolled full- or part-time in communication sciences and disorders programs or related major. Students in the master's program will be encouraged to be involved in this organization.

Part VI. Assessment

There are a number of external and internal metrics used by the program to assess the quality of the program. One major mechanism used by the program to synthesize our data on program quality is having to complete the annual accreditation report, which requires reporting on the program's compliance with accreditation standards. This report requires us to address how the program is meeting CAA standards on: Administrative Structure and Governance, Faculty, Curriculum, Students, Assessment, and Program Resources. Within the assessment section, evidence must be provided on how the program conducts systematic formative and summative assessments of the performance of students, progress toward completion of the graduate degree and professional credentialing, program effectiveness, and how the program uses results of these assessments for continuous improvement.

The program has undergone five evaluations by the CAA (original application and site visit, 2 annual reports, and full accreditation application and site visit). In our original application, CAA found three out of 50 standards that were not met: Standard 2.2 Faculty Sufficiency, Standard 3.6 Clinical Education Agreements and Standard 6.2 Facilities. It should be noted that, at the time of the site visit, the program was beginning to recruit faculty members, develop its clinical externship plans, and to discuss our permanent home in the Tower at STAR were beginning to be discussed. The program received full accreditation from CAA in February 2020.

The Praxis Examination in Speech-Language Pathology is an integral component of the ASHA certification requirement and provides the program with a summative evaluation of the students' academic knowledge. The exam is taken by students during their last semester or following graduation. Results of the Praxis exam for the first three cohort

(Class of 2018, 2019, 2020) provided us with an overall assessment of our program. All 73 students passed the exam in their first attempt. Although pleased with the results of our students' performance, we implemented "Praxis Exam Prep Sessions" for the second cohort during the winter session of their second year. Our goal for these sessions is for students to better prepare for the Praxis Exam by creating study groups that will review course material and discuss test taking strategies earlier, and with less anxiety, than our first cohort.

All students who graduate complete an exit survey which addresses program strengths and weaknesses. One major area of weakness noted by the first and second cohort students was in the area of motor speech disorders. Due to lack of faculty expertise in this major content area, two adjuncts from other institutions were hired to teach the course during the summer session. Although students were extremely pleased with the instructors, they found the condensed course difficult for content retention. Students also recommended having a faculty member with specific content expertise throughout the year in order to increase their ability to effectively diagnose and treat individuals with motor speech disorders. In order to remedy the situation, the CSCD faculty petitioned for an additional faculty line in the area of motor speech disorders. This position was approved and a faculty member with expertise in motor speech disorders was hired.

Student learning is central to our program and students are required to demonstrate specific competencies prior to graduation. Each course syllabus specifies knowledge and skill to be gained and approaches used to assess the specific knowledge and skill addressed. Students are required to demonstrate mastery of all of the knowledge and skills addressed. If a student fails to master specific knowledge or skill, a remediation plan is implemented by the instructor in order to ensure that the student must demonstrate competency of the specific knowledge or skill.