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**Division of  
Communication Sciences and Disorders**  
*Health Advisors' Handbook*

**Academic Year  
2008-2009**

***ACADEMIC PROGRAM***  
**Communication Sciences and Disorders**

**Date prepared: July 2008**

## **Program: Communication Sciences and Disorders**

**Degree:** Master of Science in Rehabilitation Science - Communication Sciences and Disorders

**For current detail or changes, see our website:** <http://www.musc.edu/chp/csd>

### **The Profession**

The profession of speech-language pathology is governed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), which “is the professional, scientific, and credentialing association for [more than 127,000 members and affiliates](#) who are audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists.” See <http://www.asha.org>. The professional entry-degree is a masters degree from an accredited graduate program. Several “Special Interest Divisions (SIDS)” within ASHA recognize advanced credentials but these credentials typically accompany advanced clinical experience, and are not required for clinical practice.

The majority of states require a license to practice speech-language pathology. In the State of South Carolina, licensing information can be obtained by contacting the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, South Carolina, Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, PO Box 11329, Columbia, SC 29211; 803/896-4650. See <http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/Speech>. See *ASHA State-by State* <http://www.asha.org/about/legislation-advocacy/state/>.

Speech-language pathology is dedicated to individuals of all ages who are unable to communicate effectively due to learning difficulty, disease, or trauma. Common causes of communication impairment are: birth defects of all types, including clefts of the lip and palate; learning disorders associated with developmental delay, mental retardation, attention deficit disorder, and autism; tumors and trauma affecting children and adolescents; stroke and other neurologic disorders such as multiple sclerosis, Lou Gehrig’s disease, and Parkinson’s disease; and progressive illnesses affecting older age groups, such as Alzheimer’s dementia.

Speech-language pathologists diagnose and treat disorders of speech (articulation, respiration, voice, resonance, and fluency), language, cognition, and swallowing. They select and develop augmentative or alternative communication systems for persons who cannot communicate orally. Speech-language pathologists may also provide aural rehabilitation for individuals who are hearing-impaired.

### **Career Options**

The major types of work are: clinical work (direct patient care), research, teaching, administration, and consultation.

The employment settings include: schools (K-12), hospitals (emergency, acute, and inpatient rehabilitation), outpatient rehabilitation facilities, community clinics, residential and custodial or long-term care facilities, early intervention programs, home health programs, hospice programs, university clinics, and private practice.

### **Employment Outlook**

The U.S. Department of Labor reported that “employment of speech-language pathologists is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2012.”

## Salary Information

In 2006, about 107,000 speech-language pathologists held the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Salaries vary depending on position, years of experience, degree of education, geographic location and practice setting. The median salary for a clinical speech-language pathologist is \$52,410 according to ASHA's 2003 *Omnibus Survey*. The U.S. Department of Labor website states: "Median annual earnings of speech-language pathologists were \$52,410 in May 2004. The middle 50 percent earned between \$42,090 and \$65,750." See <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos099.htm> .

### ASHA's 2005 Health Care Survey

*Median Annual Salary by Type of Facility (Annual=12 months)*

General Medical	\$61,250
Rehab Hospital	\$58,920
Pediatric Hospital	\$60,000
Skilled Nursing Facility	\$68,200
Home Health	\$53,000
Clinic	\$60,000

### ASHA's 2006 Schools Survey

*Median Academic Year Salaries by Type of Facility (AY= 9-10 months)*

Day/residential	\$60,128
Preschool	\$53,290
Elementary	\$52,000
Secondary	\$54,750
Combined	\$51,537

## The Program

The MUSC Communication Sciences and Disorders Program offers a graduate, entry-level masters degree curriculum that begins each year in late May. The program is full-time, year-round and takes 24 months to complete.

Communication disorders are caused by differences in biological structure and function, as well as social and psychological factors. For this reason, the Communication Sciences and Disorders curriculum emphasizes the biologic bases of speech, language, cognitive and swallowing disorders, as well as the medical, social, cultural, and psychological context of these disorders and their treatment.

The major areas of emphasis in the curriculum are: basic human communication processes (health promotion, human anatomy, neuroscience, psychopathology), normal speech-language development and speech-language disorders, audiology/hearing, clinical management, professional issues (ethics and regulatory issues), and research methods designed to establish students' understanding of the scientific literature and to enhance evidence-based practice.

In the clinical education arm of the program, students engage in supervised practice in the public schools, at MUSC Hospital and in other local clinical sites (e.g., home health, private practice, rehabilitation, acute hospital care). During the last semester, students complete two full-time, supervised clinical externships at various sites in the United States. Students are required to attain at least 400 hours of supervised clinical experiences prior to graduation.

## Accreditation

The MUSC program has been continuously accredited by the Council for Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Originally accredited December 1, 2000, the program underwent a comprehensive review in 2005, and achieved renewed accreditation through November 30, 2013. Program standards meet or exceed the requirements of the Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) which outlines the essential academic and clinical knowledge and skills of all speech-language pathology graduates applying for the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP).

## Application Procedures

The program commences near the end of May of each year. Applications are available from July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to the program starting until April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year classes commence.

The following application deadlines are used:

- Early/Priority Application 15 October
- Regular Application 15 January

Regular deadline dates may be extended based on space availability

Applications are available on the MUSC website at <http://www.musc.edu/es>. For questions about the online application process or for a pre-application review of an undergraduate transcript, call the Office of Enrollment Management (OEM) (843) 792-5396. For additional information, contact Dr. Peter Bowman, Director of Admissions for Communication Sciences and Disorders Division at (843) 792-3942 or email: [bowmanpj@musc.edu](mailto:bowmanpj@musc.edu)

## Application Requirements

Application requirements include:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (college or university);
- Prerequisite courses completed, or to be completed, before entrance to the program;
- Official and final transcripts of all work completed at other institutions;
- GRE scores, including verbal, quantitative and analytic/writing;
- Three letters of recommendation.

Both in-state and out-of-state applicants are accepted on the basis of academic merit and letters of recommendation identifying outstanding personal attributes (e.g., work ethic and breadth of undergraduate experiences); when merit is equal, preference will be given to in-state applicants.

Program-specific requirements and prerequisites (e.g., clinical observations and specific coursework) are identified in the application materials.

Potential applicants with questions should email: [rehabadmissions@musc.edu](mailto:rehabadmissions@musc.edu) or contact the Office of Enrollment Management at [oesadmis@musc.edu](mailto:oesadmis@musc.edu) or (843) 792-8712.

**Prerequisites**

<i>Prerequisite</i>	<i>Semester Hours</i>
Human Anatomy <i>or</i> Anatomy of Speech & Hearing	3
Other Biological Sciences At least one of the following:	3
• Biology	
• Physiology	
• Genetics	
Physical Sciences At least one of the following:	3
• Chemistry	
• Physics	
• Geology	
Social/behavioral Sciences At least one of the following:	3
• Normal Human Psychology	
• Linguistics	
• Anthropology	
• Economics	
• History	
• Sociology	
• Political Science	
Mathematics (nonremedial)	3
Statistics (introductory)	3

Other highly recommended optional courses:

- Introduction to communication sciences and disorders / speech pathology
- 8 hours observation of speech pathology services (therapy, assessment, counseling)
- Writing composition
- Research design / methods

**Selection Factors**

Entrance to the Rehabilitation Science graduate degree programs is competitive. Offers of admission to the program follow careful review by an Admissions Committee in each program in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences. Depending on the number of applicants and the inherent competitiveness of the application process, there will be variation across individual programs in the final criteria, and weighting of individual factors. The Admissions Committee of the Communication Sciences and Disorders academic program will make final decisions regarding admissions.

The goal of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Admissions Committee is to accept a diverse group of students, who will enrich the educational and classroom experience. The Admissions Committee gives careful consideration to:

- Cumulative GPA (at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale);
- Science GPA (at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale);
- GRE Scores (at least 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on each section, verbal, quantitative and analytic);
- CLEP (advanced placement) credit where applicable;
- Letters of recommendation;
- Applicant's personal statement. Factors of interest to the Committee include: the reputation of the applicant's undergraduate college or university for academic rigor; academic or other awards; employment history; extent of volunteer work; achievements in extracurricular activities such as music, art, sports and university or community service; evidence of leadership; bilingualism and travel; and, unique life events involving personal challenges, or ethnic, racial and cultural experiences.

### Applicant Statistics

#### 2008 Entering Class, Communication Sciences and Disorders

Applied		Offered		Accepted	
Number	104	Number	44	Number	30
In-State	41	In-State	20	In-State	16
Out of State	63	Out of State	24	Out of State	14
Male	0	Male	0	Male	0
Female	104	Female	44	Female	30
Average Age	23.62	Average Age	23.39	Average Age	22.76
		Average GPA	3.61	Average GPA	3.56
		Average GRE*	1701	Average GRE*	1672

\* All components included – no breakdown of score given. GRE Analytical Writing scores are converted using the following procedure and added to Verbal and Quantitative scores.

6 = 800      5.5 = 750      5 = 700      4.5 = 650      4 = 600      3.5 = 550  
 3 = 500      2.5 = 450      2 = 400      1.5 = 350      1 = 300      0.5 = 250  
 0 = 200

### Minimum Skills/ Eligibility Requirements for Communication Sciences and Disorders Applicants/Students:

#### *Communication Sciences and Disorders Program* **Minimum Skills and Essential Functions of Graduate Students**

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of speech-language pathology, to function in a broad variety of clinical situations, and to render a wide spectrum of patient care, individuals must have knowledge, skills and attributes in five areas in order to fulfill the essential functions of graduate education. These five areas are: communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive sensory-observational, and behavioral-social. These knowledge areas, skills and attributes enable a student to fulfill the essential functions of graduate student training programs, and to meet graduate and professional requirements as measured by state licensure and national certification. Many of these skills can be learned and developed during the course of the graduate program through coursework and clinical experience. The starred items (\*), however, are skills that represent intrinsic capacities or abilities, and should be present when a student begins the graduate program.

## COMMUNICATION

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English language. (Additional language(s) to be determined by program.)\*
- Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.\*
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.\*
- Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.\*
- Communicate professionally and intelligibly with patients, colleagues, other healthcare professionals, and community or professional groups.
- Communicate professionally, effectively, and legibly on patient documentation, reports, and scholarly papers required as a part of course work and professional practice.
- Convey information accurately with relevance and cultural sensitivity.

## MOTOR

A student most posses adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities.\*
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations including fire, choking, etc.\*
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.\*
- Participate in classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.\*
- Efficiently manipulate testing and treatment environment and materials without violation of testing protocol and with best therapeutic practice.
- Manipulate patient-utilized equipment (e.g. durable medical equipment to include AAC devices, hearing aids, etc) in a safe manner.
- Access technology for clinical management (i.e. billing, charting, therapy programs, etc.).

## INTELLECTUAL / COGNITIVE

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.\*
- Identify significant findings from history, evaluation, and data to formulate a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan.
- Solve problems, reason, and make sound clinical judgments in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic plan and implementation.
- Self evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skill (relative to level of experience), and be able to identify and use resources in order to increase knowledge and skills.
- Use detailed written and verbal instruction when making decisions.

## SENSORY/OBSERVATIONAL

A student must possess adequate sensory attributes in the modalities of vision, hearing, and touch to:

- Identify normal and disordered speech, language and cognition through vision, hearing and touch (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).
- Identify the need for alternative modalities of communication.
- Visualize and identify anatomic structures.
- Visualize and discriminate imaging findings.
- Identify and discriminate findings on imaging studies.

- Discriminate text, numbers, tables, and graphs associated with diagnostic instruments and tests.
- Recognize when a client's family does or does not understand the clinician's written and oral communication.

### **BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL**

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.\*
- Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, genders, races/ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.\*
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and legal manner, upholding the ASHA Code of Ethics, and university, state, and federal compliance policies.\*
- 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 settings.\*
- Adapt to changing and demanding environments (which includes maintaining both professional demeanor and emotional health).
- Manage the use of time effectively to complete professional and technical tasks within realistic time constraints.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modifying behaviors independently or per the direction of supervisors.
- Dress appropriately and professionally.

Upon admission, an otherwise-qualified student who discloses a disability (with certification) is assured of reasonable accommodation. These accommodations include: opportunities for individual and group counseling; peer counseling; linkages with community services; faculty advisory committees that are aware of disabled students and their needs; career counseling; assistance with job searches and interview skills; and other enabling services. Students seeking accommodation are required to initiate their request in the Office of Student Affairs, College of Health Professions. Revised and adopted, 10/3/07.

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