



Graduate Student Handbook for Speech-Language Pathology

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

2024
(6/28/24)

for Students Entering the Program in 2024



WCU's SLP Program is Accredited in Speech-Language Pathology
by

The Council on Academic Accreditation
in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology



Table of Contents

SLP Graduate Student Handbook AY 2024-2025

Welcome New Students!	6
CSD Mission Statement	7
Policy on Equitable Treatment	7
Departmental Information	8
Administrative Staff	8
Physical Facilities	9
Classroom (Room 428)	9
Speech and Hearing Clinic	9
Computer Room (Room 420)	9
Library (Room 419, or “Multipurpose Seminar Room”)	9
Speech Science Research Laboratory (Room 430)	9
Wireless Internet Connectivity	10
Use of Department Facilities	10
Program Prerequisites	11
Core Functions	11
25 clinical observation hours	11
Five Prerequisite Courses (KASA Standards IV-A and Neurology)	11
The SLP Program curriculum	14
Courses in the Core Curriculum	14
Electives	14
Simulation Experiences	15
Bilingual Emphasis Course Sequence (BECS) — A Program Option	15
Clinical Practicum	17
Clinical Practicum Environments	17
GPA Prerequisites	17
Clinical Practicum Clock-Hour Requirements	17
Off-Campus Affiliation Practicum	17
PA Educational Specialist Certification for SLP	18
On-Campus Clinicals	18
Off-Campus Clinical Affiliations	18
Affiliation Courses	18
Affiliation Requirements	19
1. Complete Academic Prerequisites	19
2. Submit an Affiliation Request Form	19
3. Register for SLP 552 or 553	19
4. Receive an Affiliation Assignment from Director of Clinical Services	19
5. Interview with Site Supervisor	19
6. Determine Starting and Ending Dates	19

7. Complete Site-Specific Requirements	20
8. Important Note about Clinical Clock Hours	20
9. Affiliation Performance Standards.....	20
10. Documentation of Clinical Clock Hours.....	20
<i>Summative Assessments.....</i>	21
ROSA (Repeated Objective Summative Assessment).....	21
SLP Praxis 5331	22
General Description.....	22
Purpose.....	22
Registering for the Praxis.....	22
Using the Recipient Codes	22
Score Report Form	23
<i>Research and Scholarship Options</i>	24
Student-Faculty Collaboration.....	24
MA Scholarship Award	24
Thesis Research.....	24
<i>The Curriculum Sequence</i>	26
Academic Program Plan – Pattern A.....	27
Academic Program Plan – Pattern B.....	28
Academic Program Plan – Pattern C	29
<i>Performance Standards.....</i>	30
Academic standards	30
General Degree Requirements	30
Academic Probation	30
Degree Candidacy.....	30
KASA Standards	30
Tracking KASA Standards Via CALIPSO	31
Standards of Conduct.....	33
The CSD Student Conduct Policy.....	33
Consequences of Conduct Violations	34
<i>Advisement, Scheduling, and Student Records.....</i>	36
Advisor.....	36
Advisement Goals.....	36
ADVISEMENT PROTOCOLS.....	37
Scheduled Group Advisement/Pro-Seminar Events (GAP) Meetings.....	37
Individual office visits	37
MA Advisement Site on D2L.....	37
Course Scheduling	38
Student Records.....	38
RamPortal.....	38
CALIPSO	38
Academic Files	38
<i>Important Academic Policies.....</i>	39

Policies Regarding Transfer Courses	39
Transfer Courses and KASA Requirements	39
Transfer Course Restrictions.....	39
Exception to Transfer Course Restrictions.....	39
Criteria for Acceptance of Transfer Credits.....	39
Time Limit on Transfer Credits	40
Enrollment Policies	40
Continuous Enrollment.....	40
Provisional Enrollment Status	41
Notification of Withdrawal from Classes or from the SLP Program.....	41
Petitions for Exception to Policy	41
Grade Appeals	41
WCU References	42
<i>Student Services</i>	42
Graduate Assistantships	43
NSSLHA	43
Program Assessment and Growth	44
Complaints about the Program	44
Appendix A: Core Functions	46
POLICIES INFLUENCING THE PROGRAM OF STUDY	46
DESCRIPTION OF CORE FUNCTIONS	47
Appendix B: Applying for Teacher Candidacy and PA Ed. Spec. Cert. in SLP	51
Procedures	51
1. Apply for Teacher Candidacy (leading to the PA Ed Spec Cert in SLP).....	51
2. Complete Required Coursework.....	51
3. Apply for three clearances	51
4. Apply for the PA Educational Specialist Certification in SLP via TIMS.....	52
5. Wait for your certification to be processed	52
Teacher Candidacy Form	53
Checklist of Requirements for Teacher Candidacy	54
Appendix C: Writing a Thesis	55
General Facts about Thesis Work	55
Selecting the Thesis Option.....	55
Selecting a Thesis Topic.....	55
Time Required to Complete a Thesis	56
Selecting a Thesis Director	57
Selecting a Thesis Committee (aka Examining Committee)	57
Developing a Thesis Prospectus.....	58
Oral Defense of Prospectus	58
Regulations Regarding the Research Process	58
Guidelines for the Treatment of Subjects.....	59
Off-campus Contacts	59
Style and Format Guidelines for Writing a Thesis.....	59
Oral Defense of Thesis	59
Critical Milestones for Thesis Completion.....	60

Appendix D: Student Conduct Policy.....63

Expectations of Conduct in On-Campus Settings63

 Appropriate interaction with academic and clinical faculty63

 Appropriate interactions with faculty, administrators, and support staff at the department, college, university levels.....63

 Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values63

 Adherence to class schedules.....63

 Adherence to attendance and class participation policies63

 Demonstrate preparation64

Expectations of Conduct in Off-Campus Affiliation Settings64

 Appropriate interaction with WCU and affiliation supervisor64

 Appropriate interaction with other affiliation site staff members and administrators.....64

 Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values64

 Adherence to policies.....64

 Adherence to attendance and responsibility requirements64

 Adherence to expected levels of preparedness65

Consequences of Conduct Violations65

Welcome New Students!

Welcome to West Chester University's Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) graduate program in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD)! We hope you will find your experience at WCU to be pleasant, challenging, and rewarding.

The SLP *Graduate Student Handbook* (known here as the *Handbook*) will serve as a supplement to the following important sources of information available to you via [WCU's website](#)

- WCU's current [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [The Ram's Eye View](#)
- Policies and forms on WCU's [Graduate School website](#)
- Information provided on WCU's web-based [MA Advisement site](#) on D2L

This *Handbook* provides an overview and a guide to important information about CSD and about the Master of Arts (MA) graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). Please keep this *Handbook* throughout your MA program and with your personal professional records thereafter. Its contents will help you plan and record your progress through the program, and it may be useful to you after graduation for documenting aspects of your graduate experience.

CSD's graduate program is accredited for **Speech-Language Pathology** by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). In compliance with the CAA, we ask that you become familiar with three cardinal documents, available at www.asha.org

- [ASHA's Code of Ethics](#)
- [The Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology](#)
- [2020 Standards and Implementation Procedures for the CCC-SLP](#)

Important Notes:

- **Information in this *Handbook* is subject to change as policies of the University, Department, ASHA, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) are updated.** Changes may also be made when recommended by the faculty to address emergent issues. If such changes occur, you will be informed through e-mail from the Graduate Coordinator and through notices posted to the web-based MA Advisement site on D2L (described later in this Handbook)
- This *Handbook* is updated annually while *WCU's Graduate Catalog* is updated once every two years. Therefore, it happens, occasionally, that some information appears different in the *Graduate Student Handbook* than in *WCU's Graduate Catalog*. If you find such a discrepancy, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.
- The Graduate Coordinator will serve as your advisor and is available to support you throughout the program, but **the responsibility for completing all requirements for conforming to current policies and for meeting all deadlines is ultimately your own.**

CSD Mission Statement

West Chester University's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) offers three programs: (1) a Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in CSD, (2) A Pregraduate Certification Program (PCP) allowing students with a degree in another discipline to complete core undergraduate CSD courses as a prerequisite for applying to graduate studies in SLP or AUD, and (3) a Master of Arts (MA) in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP).

- The BA and PCP programs offer a firm theoretical and empirical basis for understanding the nature of normal communication and swallowing processes and with an introduction to communication disorders.
- The M.A. program offers learning experiences that address the knowledge and skills standards defined by AHSA's Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) in Speech-Language Pathology, including...
 - Content targeting knowledge of theoretical and evidence-based frameworks for understanding the prevention, assessment, and treatment of communication and swallowing disorders
 - Opportunities to apply knowledge in the application of skills toward critical thinking and problem-solving within closely supervised on- and off-campus clinical practice settings.
 - Opportunities to learn and apply competencies to support interprofessional collaboration.
 - Research opportunities to prepare students for becoming informed consumers of the literature and for pursuing graduate work beyond the master's level if desired.

Together with other programs in the West Chester University community, the BA, PCP, and MA programs support students in becoming individuals who are broadly educated, excel at critical thinking and evidence-based problem solving, and behave in accordance with values documented in ASHA's Code of Ethics, the College of Health Sciences' Strategic Priorities, and WCU's mission, including inclusion and cultural sensitivity.

Policy on Equitable Treatment

Consistent with [WCU's Mission Statement](#), the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders complies with all applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders prohibiting discrimination towards students, faculty, staff, and persons served in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. This includes prohibitions on discrimination based on any category prohibited by applicable law, including, but not limited to, age, citizenship, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status. WCU's [Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (ODEI) provides leadership and expertise to the campus community toward promoting the principles of inclusivity. This includes monitoring and recommending policies that promote an equitable learning and working environment free from discrimination and harassment. The Office is available to receive complaints, charges, and litigation alleging violations of policies and procedures related to non-discrimination. When complaints or charges arise at the Department level, individuals are referred to the ODEI.

Departmental Information

Mailing Address: Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383

Location: 201 Carter Drive, West Chester, PA 19383

Phone: 610-436-3401

Website: [MA Program for Speech-Language Pathology](#)

Administrative Staff

Name	Administrative Position	Office #	Phone	e-mail
Mary Kay Gormley	CSD Secretary	406	610-436-3401	mgormley@wcupa.edu
Jacqueline Johnson	Admin. Assistant, S/H Clinic	401	610- 436-3402	jjohnson@wcupa.edu

Faculty

Name	Academic Position	Office #	Phone	E-Mail
Annemarie Cox, Au.D.	Adjunct Professor			ACox2@wcupa.edu
Heather Forbes, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCBA	Assistant Professor	418	610-436-3218	HForbes@wcupa.edu
Elizabeth Grillo, Ph.D., CCC-SLP	Professor PCP Coordinator	413	610-436-2132	EGrillo@wcupa.edu
Timothy Huang, Ph.D., CCC-SLP	Assistant Professor Comm. Coordinator BA Coordinator NSSLHA Advisor	414	610-436-3403	CHuang@wcupa.edu
Sojung Kim, Ph.D., CCC-SLP	Associate Professor Chairperson	408	610-436-2367	SKim@wcupa.edu
Patricia Swasey Washington, Ph.D., CCC-SLP	Associate Professor BECS Coordinator Assessment Coord.	415	610-436-3404	PSwaseyWashington@wcupa.edu
Sarah Moreau, M.A., CCC-SLP	Adjunct Professor Dir. of Clinical Services	409	610-436-3436	SMoreau@wcupa.edu
Reva Zimmerman, Ph.D., CCC-SLP	Assistant Professor Graduate Coordinator	407	610-436-2588	RZimmerman@wcupa.edu

Physical Facilities

The Department of CSD and WCU's Speech and Hearing Clinic are located at 201 Carter Drive, at the eastern end of the campus. The building houses the Department's academic and clinical offices on a single floor and is accessible to individuals with mobility impairments.

Reserved parking for clients is located adjacent to the clinic. Students with West Chester University parking permits may park in the Bull Center parking lot or in the parking garage, both of which are located across Matlack Street. As CSD majors, students are welcome to use the Department's facilities as soon as they are admitted to the MA program.

Areas included within the Department complex are described below:

Classroom (Room 428)

The classroom is used for all graduate courses for cohorts of 40 students or fewer. It is equipped with a videoconferencing system, including video cameras, monitors, and peripheral devices such as a computer, document camera, and VCR/DVD player. At times, this room is used to conduct distance education (DE) classes.

Speech and Hearing Clinic

WCU's Speech and Hearing Clinic includes six individual sound-treated therapy rooms, two larger therapy rooms (one typically used for children and one for adults), therapy room observation corridors, a Clinic Materials and Preparation room, a Waiting Room for clients and their families, a Clinic Office, and a Video Control Room used by supervisors to observe activity within the therapy rooms. The Clinic also contains a double-walled audiometric test suite. Additional information about the Clinic is detailed in the Department's *Clinic Handbook* and on CSD website [Clinic page](#).

Computer Room (Room 420)

The Computer Room contains desktop personal computers (PCs) for student use. Each is tied wirelessly into the University Local Area Network, providing access to various software packages, to the University's electronic library catalog, to e-mail and to the Internet. Additionally, this room contains a few anatomical models and other items that are used for teaching, research, and clinical management.

Library (Room 419, or "Multipurpose Seminar Room")

The multipurpose seminar room contains a conference table and chairs, a white board, and a collection of books and journals. When not in use for seminars or teacher/student conferences, this room can be used for individual study and group meetings.

Speech Science Research Laboratory (Room 430)

The Speech Science Research Laboratory contains a cabinet, bookshelves, tables, and research equipment. The room is also used for adult therapy when clinic is in session and no other rooms are available. Students conducting research are permitted to use the research lab only with faculty approval. The room must remain locked when it is not in use to protect the instruments stored therein.

Wireless Internet Connectivity

Students may access the internet in any area of the Department or Clinic. As indicated above, they may do so using the computers in the Computer Laboratory. They may also do so using their own laptops or laptops that can be checked out from the Computer/Speech-Science Lab.

Use of Department Facilities

Hours of Operation

The use of all Department facilities is limited to times during which either the Department secretary and/or a faculty member are present. If a responsible administrative or faculty person is not present in the Department, the Department will be locked and unavailable for use. Typical hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 pm.

Study Areas

The Department does not have office space for individual graduate students. However, several rooms are available in the Department for use as study areas. These include (as indicated above) the Multipurpose Seminar room, the Clinic Preparation room, the Computer Room (when not in use for meetings), and individual therapy rooms (when not in use for clinic). When students use these spaces, they are expected to keep them clean and to conduct their activities in a manner that does not compromise other activities in adjacent spaces.

The **Computer Room (Room 420)**, like other Departmental facilities, is available for use by students as a study area when it is not being used for another function (e.g., faculty meetings). If the door to the lab is locked, a key can be obtained from the Department secretary or a faculty member. **When using this space (like all other spaces in the Department), students are responsible for making sure that the electronic devices are turned off, and that the lights are turned off.**

The **Computer Room** is frequently used by students and faculty alike. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to schedule activities in this room. When this occurs, a sign-up sheet will be placed on the door to the room.

Telephones

The use of Department telephones is restricted. Students may use Departmental phones for communicating with clinic clients. These activities require permission of the Director of Clinical Services, the Department's secretary, the Clinic Administrative Assistant, or a faculty member. The procedure for making long distance calls is based on the PaNET system and must be strictly followed. The Departmental Secretary, Clinic Administrative Assistant, or Faculty can explain how this works.

Bulletin Boards

The Department maintains bulletin boards that contain information of interest to students. These boards are in the library, the clinic preparation room and in the Department's hallways, including the hallway to the Department Chairperson's office. Please check these boards periodically for news.

Program Prerequisites

To participate in the SLP graduate program, students must submit evidence that documents completion of these prerequisites:

Core Functions

Core functions are conditions and skills needed, with or without reasonable accommodations, to participate in clinical service delivery, including...

1. physical health
2. motor skills
3. observation skills
4. communication skills
5. cognitive skills
6. behavioral/emotional health
7. professional skills

These skills are defined in detail in [Appendix A](#) of this Handbook. Students are asked to read this appendix and to sign a form to indicate that they have read the document, agree with its contents, and understand that a failure to meet expectations despite reasonable accommodations and reasonable levels of support from the faculty may result in a recommendation to discontinue the program.

25 Clinical Observation Hours

Observation of clinical service delivery is typically included in undergraduate programs in communication sciences and disorders. Documentation of hours may be provided in one of three ways: (1) In a letter from an instructor written on university letterhead, stating that a student has completed all 25 observation hours; (2) in a form created by the undergraduate program which lists details about each observation (e.g., client's age, type of disorder, length of observation) and includes the signature plus ASHA ID# of the clinically-certified clinician who supervised each observation; (3) a summary list from Master Clinician Network (MCN) approved by a clinically-certified supervisor, listing the details of each observation.

Completion of 25 supervised observation hours is a prerequisite for participation in clinical practicum during the spring semester of the first year in the program. Students must send documentation of their completion of the 25 observation hours to the Graduate Coordinator as an attachment to email upon entering the program. This information will be maintained in each student's academic and CALIPSO file. (CALIPSO will be described later in this Handbook).

Five Prerequisite Courses (KASA Standards IV-A and Neurology)

To qualify for the Clinical Fellowship (CF) following graduation, students must complete all Knowledge and Skill (KASA) Standards defined by ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC). Four of these standards pertain to undergraduate courses in physical science, biological science, statistics, and lifespan development, respectively. Additionally, a course in the neurology of

speech, language, and communication is required by WCU's SLP program as a prerequisite for graduate studies. All requirements are summarized below.

Prerequisite Courses: KASA and Program-Specific

Standard Addressed	Criteria for Demonstrating Acquisition
KASA Standard IV-A1 Biological Sciences Course must be taken in a department other than CSD	Successfully complete coursework with content that covers one or more of the following areas : General biology; principles related to the human organism; and/or principles of human relationships with the world/biosphere.
KASA Standard IV-A2 Physical Sciences Course must be taken in a department other than CSD	Successfully complete coursework in physics or chemistry .
KASA Standard IV-A3 Mathematics: Statistics	Successfully complete coursework with content that covers one or more of the following areas : General math, algebra, geometry, statistics, calculus. NOTE: WCU requires a statistics course.
KASA Standard IV-A4 Social/Behavioral Sciences: Lifespan Dev.	Successfully complete coursework with content that covers one or more of the following areas : General psych, general sociology, culture, psychology of learning, educational psychology of cognition, psychology of personality, developmental psychology across the lifespan, social psychology, physiological psychology, abnormal psychology, sociology of aging, sociology of the family. NOTE: WCU requires a course in Lifespan Development. Lifespan = infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.
MA Program Standard Undergraduate Neurology Course	The completion of a standalone undergraduate course in the neurology of speech, language, and hearing is a prerequisite of WCU's graduate SLP program.

More about KASA Standard IV-A Courses

Content targeted by Standard IV-A is typically completed at the undergraduate level. Incoming graduate students who did not complete these courses in their undergraduate programs must complete them during the summer before they begin graduate studies (preferred) or during the first year of graduate studies. The courses can be completed online or in person at any accredited institution of higher education. In some cases (biology, chemistry, lifespan development) course credit can also be earned by passing a proficiency test given through the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP <https://clep.collegeboard.org>). Completion of Standard IV-A content is a prerequisite for earning [Degree Candidacy](#) during the first year of graduate studies (described later in this Handbook) and for beginning the Clinical Fellowship (CF) in speech-language pathology following graduation.

More about the Undergraduate Neurology Course

Completion of the neurology course is also a prerequisite for earning [Degree Candidacy](#). Since undergraduate CSD programs differ in their presentation of neurology content, incoming graduate students often represent one of three groups:

- Group 1 – students who have completed a free-standing course in the neurology of speech, language, and hearing.
- Group 2 – students who have received the equivalent of a free-standing course in neurology through units in neurology across several courses in their undergraduate programs.
- Group 3 – students who have not been exposed to neurology content at the level of depth equivalent to a free-standing course on the topic.

Students in Group 1 will have met the neurology course prerequisite. Students in Group 2 will have the option to complete the Neurology Qualifying Exam (NQE) administered at WCU during the summer before graduate studies begin. Students in Group 3 or those who are not sure whether they have been exposed to sufficient content may also take the NQE. However, students who fail the NQE or whose exposure to in-depth content in neurology has been limited must complete an undergraduate course on the topic. The course can be completed online or in person at any accredited institution of higher education during the summer before graduate studies begin (preferred) or during the fall semester together with graduate courses.

The SLP Program curriculum

The SLP program's core curriculum addresses the KASA standards that prepare students for professional work as SLPs across service delivery settings. It includes 63 semester hours.

Courses in the Core Curriculum

Prefix & Course #	Course Names	Semester Credits
SLP 501	Foundations of Research	1
SLP 511	Child Lang. Disorders I: 0-5 years	3
SLP 512	Child Lang. Disorders II: 6-18 years	3
SLP 515	Adult Neurogenic Speech Disorders	2
SLP 516	Adult Neurogenic Communication Disorders	3
SLP 523	Voice Disorders	3
SLP 524	Fluency Disorders	3
SLP 526	Clinical Articulation & Phonology	3
SLP 543	Aural Rehabilitation	3
SLP 545	Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)	3
SLP 551	Clinical Practicum (S/L Clinic-1)	3
SLP 551	Clinical Practicum (S/L Clinic-2)	3
SLP 551	Clinical Practicum (Hearing Clinic)	1.5
SLP 551	Clinical Practicum (S/L Diagnostics)	1.5
SLP 552	Medical Affiliation	6
SLP 553	School-based Affiliation	9
SLP 570	School Language, Speech, & Hearing Program	3
SLP 575	Medical Speech Pathology	3
SLP 582	Dysphagia	3
SLP XXX	Elective (to be announced each year)	3
TOTAL # Semester Hours		63

Electives

Each year the Department will offer an elective in a current topic of interest within the field of speech-language pathology (e.g., telepractice, bilingual SLP, autism, etc.). Each student will have the option of selecting this SLP elective or another relevant course offered by a different Department (with the approval of graduate coordinator). A copy of current electives within the

Department of CSD and in other departments across the university is available on the MA Advisement site on D2L (WCU's web-based system for posting information related to courses and organizations).

Simulation Experiences

During most academic courses, students will be assigned assessment and intervention tasks involving clinical simulations, which provide risk-free opportunities to practice clinical decision-making. Most of the simulations will be presented through avatars on a web-based program called **Simucase**. The use of Simucase involves a cost of \$110 per calendar year. Please establish an account by visiting this URL: <https://www.simucase.com>.

Other simulations will be provided in SLP 575 (Medical SLP) through mannequins and standardized patients. Mannequins are human-appearing robots who behave like patients by displaying symptoms and responding to interventions. Standardized patients are actors who play the role of a patient. No cost is associated with the use of mannequins and standardized patients.

Bilingual Emphasis Course Sequence (BECS) — a Program Option

Purpose

The purpose of BECS is to enhance the preparation of future SLPs who wish to serve Spanish-English bilinguals with communication impairments. This program is coordinated by Dr. Swasey Washington.

Eligibility

Students who wish to participate in BECS must do 2 things:

1. Demonstrate Spanish language proficiency by earning an "Intermediate to High" score in Spanish on the ACTFL OPIc (ACTFL = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; OPIc = Oral Proficiency Interview, computer-based).
2. Sign a contract by the end of the second week of the program to indicate that they wish to participate in BECS and that they will commit to its completion.

BECS Academic Curriculum

Students who participate in BECS take the same courses as students in the basic graduate curriculum. BECS requirements are integrated through specialized assignments in the following courses: SLP 511, SLP 512, SLP 515, SLP 516, SLP 523, SLP 524, SLP 526, and SLP 570. Instructors are notified of the BECS students enrolled in their classes. They will permit these students to utilize a bilingual/bicultural focus with at least one paper in the class, graded in consultation with Dr. Patricia Swasey Washington. An elective BECS course (SPP 560) will be offered during the first summer of the graduate program. The instructor for this course will be Dr. Swasey Washington, and the topic will be "Assessment and Intervention with Bilingual School-Age

Children.” Although this is currently an elective course, BECS students are strongly encouraged to complete it.

BECS Clinical Curriculum

One clinical practicum in speech-language pathology (SPP 551) for 3 semester credits will provide students with the opportunity to serve bilingual clients and/or clients with accent reduction issues under the supervision of Dr. Swasey Washington. One school-based clinical affiliation (SLP 553) and one medical-based affiliation (SLP 552), each for 9 semester hours, will be completed in a setting with bilingual clients.

BECS Academic Standards: Once accepted into BECS, students must demonstrate the following standards:

- Achieve and maintain standards required of all graduate students in the CSD graduate program.
- Complete with a grade of “B” or better all assignments specific to the BECS.
- Complete with a grade of “B” or better all elective courses associated with the BECS.
- Complete with a grade of “B” or better all clinical practica in the on-campus and affiliation settings.

Students will be dismissed from BECS if they demonstrate the following:

- Earn a grade below “B” on a BECS-specific assignment and fail to meet BECS-related KASA standards through either the initial assessment or the first remediation.
- Earn a semester grade below “B” in a BECS-related elective course.
- Earn a semester grade below “B” in any clinical practicum (including a repeated course).
- Fail to maintain program standards required of all graduate students in CSD (see [WCU’s Academic Standards](#), below).

BECS Certificate: Students who complete the graduate program with BECS will receive a certificate from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders documenting the completion of the BECS as part of their graduate program.

Clinical Practicum

WCU's graduate program provides students with the coursework and clinical experiences required to meet the pre-professional academic and clinical standards leading to ASHA's **Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP)**. It also provides students with the coursework and clinical practicum experiences required by the PA Department of Education (PDE) to earn the **Educational Specialist Certificate for SLP** (needed for employment in the PA schools). To meet the requirements of ASHA and PDE, students participate in practicum at three different sites: (1) WCU's Speech and Hearing Clinic, (2) a school-based affiliation, and (3) a medical affiliation. Below is a list of policies pertaining to the clinical education program as a whole.

Clinical Practicum Environments

The M.A. degree requires successful completion of supervised clinical practicum on campus at WCU's Speech and Hearing Clinic and at two off-campus affiliation sites approved by the Department.

GPA Prerequisites

To register for on-campus or off-campus clinical practica, students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in the MA program. Successful completion of the on-campus practica is a prerequisite for enrolling in the off-campus affiliations.

Clinical Practicum Clock-Hour Requirements

Students must earn a total of **400 clock hours** of clinical practicum to qualify for the M.A. degree.

- a. At least 375 clock hours must be earned in direct client/patient contact.
- b. A minimum of 325 hours must be earned at the graduate level. Up to 125 of these hours may be accrued through telepractice.
- c. A total of 75 graduate level simulation hours may be counted towards the 400 required hours.
- d. Students may receive credit for up to 50 clinical practicum hours earned at the undergraduate level under the supervision of an SLP professional with CCC-SLP from ASHA.
- e. Students must apply up to 25 clinical observation hours towards the total of 400 clinical clock hours that must be earned.

Off-Campus Affiliation Practicum

Students must complete two off-campus affiliations after having completed their on-campus clinical work. One is a school-based affiliation (SLP 553) and one is a medically based affiliation (SLP 552). Details regarding the requirements for participating in off-campus affiliation are provided below.

PA Educational Specialist Certification for SLP

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires all speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to earn either the **Educational Specialist I - School Speech and Language Pathologist PK-12 Certificate** (aka **Ed Spec Cert for SLP**) or the **Level I Teacher Certificate** if they wish to work in the schools. The curriculum of WCU's SLP graduate program includes the required content and assessment (SLP Praxis 5331) leading to the **Ed Spec Cert for SLP**, which reflects ASHA's scope of practice in SLP more closely than the **Level I Teacher Certificate**. However, note that the Ed Spec Cert for SLP is different from the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP) issued by ASHA, and it requires students to meet competencies in education and linguistics along with speech-language pathology. Information about how to apply for **Teacher Candidacy (leading to the Ed Spec Cert for SLP)** is provided in [Appendix B](#) of this Handbook.

WCU's curriculum also partially supports the Level 1 Teacher Certificate. However, students would need to complete other Praxis exams in addition to the SLP Praxis 331.

Note that certification to work in the schools is an option, not a requirement, of this graduate program. However, we strongly urge students to pursue this option, which will maintain their employment flexibility. You may think that you'd rather work in a medical setting where an educational certification is not needed. However, no one knows what the future may bring. You may decide at some later point that you'd prefer to work in a school, but the requirements for obtaining the Ed. Cert for SLP may have changed by that time.

On-Campus Clinicals

In SLP 551, students complete three on-campus clinical experiences that consist of two speech and language treatment opportunities (total of 6 credits), one speech and language diagnostic experience (1.5 credits), and one hearing diagnostic/treatment experience (1.5 credits). The sequence of these clinical experiences depends on each student's assigned academic pattern (described later in this handbook). Prerequisites for enrolling in the on-campus clinic are 25 completed observation hours and permission from the Department. More details about the on-campus clinical experience are available in the Clinic Handbook on D2L.

Off-Campus Clinical Affiliations

Below is a summary of important information regarding off-campus affiliations. More details about this process are available in the **Affiliation Practicum Handbook** on D2L.

Affiliation Courses

Off-campus clinical practicum courses include SLP 552 (Medical Affiliation) and SLP 553 (School Affiliation). All students must complete 9 credit hours (at least 12 weeks) of SLP 553 (School-based Affiliation) and 6 credit hours (at least 9 weeks) of SLP 552 (Medical Affiliation). The affiliation practica are typically scheduled in the spring and summer semesters of the second year of the program. Each student will be assigned a WCU faculty supervisor to support them during each affiliation. The WCU supervisor acts as a liaison between the student and the site

supervisor. A series of face-to-face or zoom visits will be scheduled to assess the student's performance.

Affiliation Requirements

1. Complete Academic Prerequisites

To register for an off-site affiliation, students must have earned a grade of "B" or better (both at midterm and as a final grade) in the on-campus clinical practica (SLP 551). **If this requirement is not met, students will not be permitted to register for affiliation practicum.**

2. Submit an Affiliation Request Form

To enroll in an affiliation practicum, students must complete the **affiliation request process** with the Department's Director of Clinical Services at least **two semesters prior to** the semester for which the practicum is planned. You will be provided details about this process during the fall semester of your first year.

3. Register for SLP 552 or 553

You will be enrolled in both SLP 552 and 553 by the CSD Department Secretary, based on your program plan.

4. Receive an Affiliation Assignment from Director of Clinical Services

Affiliation practica are offered only at sites where WCU's Department of CSD has a written contractual agreement. Such an agreement can only be negotiated and finalized by the Department's Director of Clinical Services. **Students may not arrange an off-campus practicum site without permission from the Director of Clinical Services.** In all cases, students will be assigned to supervisors who hold a CCC-SLP.

5. Interview with Site Supervisor

Once a site has been assigned, the student may be instructed to schedule an on-site interview. Many sites follow a student selection process requiring a formal interview. After such an interview, the student must contact the Director of Clinical Services to discuss the outcome. The Director will then contact the site for final approval.

6. Determine Starting and Ending Dates

If the site agrees to take the student, a confirmation letter will be sent to the site. The site supervisor and/or site administration will determine a starting date and ending date for the practicum. The first affiliation dates may range from December to late May. The second affiliation dates may range from January to late August, depending on the needs of the site. Once these dates are determined, they should be e-mailed to the Director of Clinical Services and to the Clinic Administrative Assistant.

7. Complete Site-Specific Requirements

Prior to beginning an affiliation practicum, students must comply with clearances and additional requirements specific to an affiliation site. The following items are typically included:

- TB test
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check
- Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
- FBI clearance
- Liability Insurance
- Contract Attestation Form
- Any drug testing (if required by the site)
- Physical examination (if required by the site)
- Evidence of Immunizations (if required by the site)
- Proof of medical insurance (if required by the site)

8. Important Note about Clinical Clock Hours

Neither the Department nor the practicum site can guarantee the exact number of clinical contact hours that a student will earn or the distribution of contact hours relative to certification requirements. Additionally, students may not end an affiliation prior to the agreed upon end date, even if all necessary ASHA clinical hours have been obtained. Students are expected to attend all days of the affiliation, and absences are only permitted due to extenuating circumstances or medical emergencies. Any absences must be made up. Students may not plan vacations during the affiliation dates.

9. Affiliation Performance Standards

Students must earn a passing grade of B (3.0) or better in each affiliation practicum (SLP 552 and SLP 553). Please note that SLP 552 and SLP 553 can be repeated only once (maximum). A repeat must result in a passing grade. Failure to pass the affiliation practicum when repeated will result in dismissal from the program. SLP 552 and SLP 553 are distinctly different courses and are not interchangeable when a repeat is required. Students must also demonstrate success in all clinical KASA standards. Students who do not demonstrate success will be required to repeat the clinical experience even if a passing grade is earned.

10. Documentation of Clinical Clock Hours

Please see the section of this Handbook called "[Tracking KASA Standards via CALIPSO](#)."

Summative Assessments

ROSA (REPEATED OBJECTIVE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT)

Three ROSAs are used to assess students' retention of information about communicative sciences and disorders up to the point of testing: the Entry ROSA, ROSA 1, and ROSA 2. ROSA results are also used to inform the faculty of content areas that may require more emphasis. The schedule and content of each assessment is summarized in below.

	Entry ROSA	ROSA 1	ROSA 2
Content	A/P of the S/H Mechanism S/H Science Language Development Phonetics & Artic/Phono Neurology of S/H Language Dis (child/adult) Fluency Voice Hearing Cultural Diversity Information Literacy Use of Technology	Foundations of Research Aural Rehabilitation Clinical Artic & Phonology Adult Neuro Speech Dis. Child Lang Dis (0-5) Cultural Diversity Information Literacy Use of Technology	Adult Neuro Dis. Child Lang. Dis. II Voice Fluency School Programs Information Literacy Use of Technology Dysphagia
Schedule	1 st year, Fall semester, 1 st month	1 st year, Late in Spring semester	2 nd year, Late in Spring semester
Pass Criteria	None (120 Questions)	65% (78 of 120 Questions)	65% (78 of 120 Questions)

SLP Praxis 5331

General Description

The **Praxis Examination in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP Praxis 5331)** is a standardized, summative assessment of knowledge important for independent clinical practice. It is commissioned by ASHA and facilitated by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). However, it is distinct from other Praxis exams required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for participation in school-based affiliation. While the other praxis exams required by PDE assess school-based applications, the SLP Praxis assesses knowledge required across all primary employment settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers, private practice, schools, etc.).

The SLP Praxis is offered in computer format only, known as the **SLP Praxis 5331**. It includes a combination of multiple-choice questions and questions that require a constructed response. All questions focus on content related to the major practice areas of basic human communication processes, phonological and language disorders, speech disorders, neurogenic disorders, audiology/hearing, clinical management, and professional issues, including psychometrics and research. Case studies assess the examinee's knowledge of possible applications to clinical situations and issues. Research articles are included to assess the examinee's ability to synthesize information and to apply it to specific examples. For more detailed information about the SLP Praxis 5331, please search for the **Praxis Examination in Speech-Language Pathology** at www.ASHA.org and at www.ets.org

Purpose

WCU's MA program uses the SLP Praxis 5331 as one of several tools for conducting a summative assessment. Therefore, **a passing score on the SLP Praxis is required for graduation**. Additionally, a passing score on the SLP Praxis is one of the requirements for earning ASHA's CCC-SLP.

Registering for the Praxis

Students will register for and take the SLP Praxis late during their last spring semester at WCU. The current minimum score for passing the SLP Praxis is 162. If a student fails, they may repeat the exam early in the summer semester. Details about registering for the exam and receiving a score report will be discussed during cohort advisement meetings early in spring semester of year 2.

Using the Recipient Codes

Registration for the SLP Praxis 5331 is done online at www.ETS.org. During the registration process, ETS will ask an applicant to enter one or more **Recipient Codes (R-Codes)** to identify the locations where the results of the test should be sent. **It is extremely important for students to enter the following R-Codes:**

RA0267 – WCU's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

2659 – WCU's College of Education

8033 – Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

Score Report Form

When you have completed the SLP Praxis, you will receive a Score Report Form from ETS. You must make a copy of the Score Report Form and send it to the Graduate Coordinator as an attachment to email to demonstrate that you have met this graduation requirement. Clearance for graduation must be completed within a specific time frame. ETS does send the Program a copy of all students who have provided the Department with the Recipient Code. However, this list does not always arrive in time for graduate clearance. Therefore, **it is imperative that each student send a copy of the Score Report form to the Graduate Coordinator as soon as it becomes available.**

Research and Scholarship Options

The CSD faculty encourages students to become both consumers and developers of scholarship in all forms, including research. Scholarship can involve a variety of activities. For example, students may conduct a literature review, formulate a research question, design an empirical study, collect data, analyze data, create posters for a presentation, and much more. Students are encouraged to engage in scholarship at any level that meets their interests and motivations. The initiation of a project can occur in various ways. Below are three of the possibilities.

Student-Faculty Collaboration

All CSD faculty engage in scholarship within their areas of expertise. Students are welcome to interview faculty members about their scholarship projects. If an area of scholarship sounds interesting, there may be a way for you to become involved. Many of our students have collaborated in research projects with faculty in this way. Collaborative projects have led to co-presentations at professional conferences and co-authorships of published journal articles.

MA Scholarship Award

The MA Scholarship Award (\$1,000) was developed in 2008 to reward an incoming graduate student for their scholarly work. In previous years, the award was given to a candidate based on the quality and feasibility of a research proposal. For academic year 2024-2025, students who submit novel and high-quality literature reviews will be considered for the MA Scholarship Award.

Thesis Research

A thesis is a formal, written document which describes one of the following:

- an original empirical study
- a replication of an empirical study
- a modification or extension of an existing empirical study
- the development of a theoretical construct
- a state-of-the art literature review

Writing a thesis is an option for all students enrolled in the SLP graduate program. It may be initiated at any time during a student's academic program and completed after the student is admitted to Degree Candidacy. However, the completion of a thesis typically requires three or more semesters. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that students who wish to pursue this option begin early in their graduate programs. A natural starting point for thinking about thesis research is during the first semester of the MA program when students are enrolled in SLP 501 (Foundations of Research). One feature of this course is a literature review that may naturally lead into an independent research project.

Students who have completed a thesis almost always acknowledge that it was extremely gratifying in terms of the technical skills they acquired, the intellectual and emotional resources that they found within themselves, and the sense of accomplishment they felt in completing a complex project successfully. The completion of a thesis is also a valuable experience for students who wish to continue their education at the doctoral level following the completion of the M.A. degree.

A detailed description of the thesis option is provided in [Appendix C](#) of this Handbook. It includes all components of the process as well as a detailed timeline.

The Curriculum Sequence

The curriculum sequence (Academic Program Plan) is offered in three patterns as shown on the following three pages.

- Each pattern leads to the required 63 semester credits in the core curriculum.
- Each pattern addresses the clinical standards required for CF upon graduation
- Each plan is fine-tuned depending on a student's needs:

If a student enters the program lacking one or more program prerequisites, they will need to take courses or to CLEP courses to complete these requirements.

- Example #1:** A student who did not complete a course in Neurology at the undergraduate level will be required to either (a) pass the Department's Neurology Qualifying Exam (NQE) administered on the day of the orientation, (b) pass the undergraduate Neurology course (CSD 208) during their first fall semester, or (c) complete an online course in neurology such as - [Longwood University's PCSD 455 \(Neurology in Human Communication\)](#).
- Example #2:** A student who did not complete a statistics course or a course in Lifespan Development during their undergraduate program must complete the the missing coursework either during the summer prior to entering the graduate program (preferred) or while taking graduate courses during the first semester of the program. The Lifespan Development content can also be addressed by passing the [Human Growth and Development CLEP](#).

If a student has earned graduate credit for required courses from another institution, they may petition to apply some of these previously earned courses toward their graduate SLP curriculum. However, they will be required to take elective courses to meet the 63-hour coursework requirement for the MA degree in SLP at WCU.

- Each pattern is time intensive. Students should plan to be present during semesters indicated by the program plan to which they are assigned. **Students are asked not to schedule family vacations, weddings, or other important events to overlap with the program plan.**

Academic Program Plan – Pattern A

Curriculum Sequence for MA in Speech-Language Pathology (63 hours)

Fall – Year 1	Cred	Winter – Year 1	Cred	Spring – Year 1	Cred	Summer – Year 1	Cred
501 – Found of Res	1	² (Elective)	(3)	512 – Child Lang II	3	Summer 1	
515 – Adult Neuro Speech	2			516 – Adult Comm Dis	3	545 AAC (2 wks. in May)	3
511 – Child Lang I	3			523 – Voice Dis	3	Summer 2	
543 – Aural Rehab	3			551 S/L Dx	1.5	551 S/L Tx	3
526 – Artic/Phono	3			551 Hearing	1.5		
¹ [CSD 208-Neuro]	(3)			ROSA 1		Summer 1, 2, or 3	
Entry ROSA						² (Elective)	(3)
¹ Total Sem Cred	12 (15)	Total Sem Cred	(3)	Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6 (9)
Obtain Clearances				Apply for Degree Candidacy and liability insurance at beginning of spring semester.		Be available for clinic one week before 2nd summer session.	

Fall – Year 2	Cred	Winter – Year 2	Cred	Spring – Year 2	Cred	Summer – Year 2	Cred
524 Fluency	3			575 Medical SLP	3	Summer 1	
570 School SLP	3			553 School Affil	9	552 – Medical Affil	6
582 Dysphagia	3			ROSA 2			
551 S/L Tx	3			SLP Praxis 5331			
Total Sem Cred	12			Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6
Apply for ³Teacher Candidacy at the beginning of the Fall semester.				Register early in the spring to take SLP Praxis late in the spring.		Apply for The Educational Specialist Certification via TIMS during the last month of the program.	
Renew Clearances. Obtain Immunization records and any other SLP 552 site requirements.				Renew Liability insurance		Graduate in August!	

¹ [CSD 208 – Neuro] – This course (Neurology of Speech and Hearing) is an option for students who need to meet the neurology course requirement

² (Elective): All students must take one 3-credit graduate elective. The elective can be taken during any semester. Recommended semesters are indicated by the “²(Elective)” prompt.

³ **Teacher Candidacy** = Candidacy with the College of Education for future Ed Specialist Certification in SLP. See [Appendix B](#)

Academic Program Plan – Pattern B

Curriculum Sequence for MA in Speech-Language Pathology (63 hours)

Fall – Year 1	Cred	Winter – Year 1	Cred	Spring – Year 1	Cred	Summer – Year 1	Cred
501 – Found of Res	1	² (Elective)	(3)	512 – Child Lang II	3	Summer 1	
515 – Adult Neuro Speech	2			516 – Adult Comm Dis	3	545 AAC (2 wks. in May)	3
511 – Child Lang I	3			523 – Voice Dis	3	Summer 2	
543 – Aural Rehab	3			551 S/L Tx	3	551 S/L Dx	1.5
526 – Artic/Phono	3			ROSA 1		551 Hearing	1.5
¹ [CSD 208-Neuro]	(3)					Summer 1, 2, or 3	
Entry ROSA						² (Elective)	(3)
¹ Total Sem Cred	12 (15)	Total Sem Cred	(3)	Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6 (9)
Obtain Clearances				Apply for Degree Candidacy and liability insurance at beginning of spring semester.		Be available for clinic one week before 2nd summer session.	

Fall – Year 2	Cred	Winter – Year 2	Cred	Spring – Year 2	Cred	Summer – Year 2	Cred
524 Fluency	3			575 Medical SLP	3	Summer 1	
570 School SLP	3			553 School Affil	9	552 – Medical Affil	6
582 Dysphagia	3			ROSA 2			
551 S/L Tx	3			SLP Praxis 5331			
Total Sem Cred	12			Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6
Apply for ³Teacher Candidacy at the beginning of the Fall semester.				Register early in the spring to take SLP Praxis late in the spring.		Apply for The Educational Specialist Certification via TIMS during the last month of the program.	
Renew Clearances. Obtain Immunization records and any other SLP 552 site requirements.				Renew Liability insurance		Graduate in August!	

¹[CSD 208 – Neuro] – This course (Neurology of Speech and Hearing) is an option for students who need to meet the neurology course requirement

²(**Elective**): All students must take one 3-credit graduate elective. The elective can be taken during any semester. Recommended semesters are indicated by the “²(Elective)” prompt.

³**Teacher Candidacy** = Candidacy with the College of Education for future Ed Specialist Certification. See [Appendix B](#)

Academic Program Plan – Pattern C

Curriculum Sequence for MA in Speech-Language Pathology (63 hours)

Fall – Year 1	Cred	Winter – Year 1	Cred	Spring – Year 1	Cred	Summer – Year 1	Cred
501 – Found of Res	1	² (Elective)	(3)	512 – Child Lang II	3	Summer 1	
515 – Adult Neuro Speech	2			516 – Adult Comm Dis	3	545 AAC (2 wks. in May)	3
511 – Child Lang I	3			523 – Voice Dis	3	Summer 2	
543 – Aural Rehab	3			551 S/L Tx	3	551 S/L Tx	1.5
526 – Artic/Phono	3			ROSA 1			
¹ [CSD 208-Neuro]	(3)					Summer 1, 2, or 3	
Entry ROSA						² (Elective)	(3)
¹ Total Sem Cred	12 (15)	Total Sem Cred	(3)	Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6 (9)
Obtain Clearances				Apply for Degree Candidacy and liability insurance at beginning of spring semester.		Be available for clinic one week before 2nd summer session.	

Fall – Year 2	Cred	Winter – Year 2	Cred	Spring – Year 2	Cred	Summer – Year 2	Cred
524 Fluency	3			575 Medical SLP	3	Summer 1	
570 School SLP	3			553 School Affil	9	552 – Medical Affil	6
582 Dysphagia	3			ROSA 2			
551 S/L Dx	1.5			SLP Praxis 5331			
551 Hearing	1.5						
Total Sem Cred	12			Total Sem Cred	12	Total Sem Cred	6
Apply for ³Teacher Candidacy at the beginning of the Fall semester. Renew Clearances. Obtain Immunization records and any other SLP 552 site requirements.				Register early in the spring to take SLP Praxis late in the spring. Renew Liability insurance		Apply for The Educational Specialist Certification via TIMS during the last month of the program. Graduate in August!	

¹ [CSD 208 – Neuro] – This course (Neurology of Speech and Hearing) is an option for students who need to meet the neurology course requirement

² (Elective): All students must take one 3-credit graduate elective. The elective can be taken during any semester. Recommended semesters are indicated by the “²(Elective)” prompt.

³ **Teacher Candidacy** = Candidacy with the College of Education for future Ed Specialist Certification. See [Appendix B](#)

Performance Standards

Academic Standards

General Degree Requirements

Graduate students must meet WCU's general requirements to earn the MA degree. This includes completion of all courses with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0-point scale. Grades and GPA values are published in RamPortal at the end of each semester.

Academic Probation

If a student's cumulative GPA falls below a B (3.0), the student will be placed on academic probation and will have one semester in which to raise their GPA to a 3.0 or better. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the University.

Degree Candidacy

Admission to Degree Candidacy is a requirement for graduation, and it is based on 3 criteria (<https://www.wcupa.edu/INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/GRADUATE.CATALOG/gdstndg.asp>)

1. **Semester Hours criterion.** A student must complete at least 12 but no more than 15 semester hours in the graduate program. In the SLP program, course completion typically includes SLP 501 (Foundations of Research), SLP 515 (Adult Speech Disorders), 511 (Child Language Disorders I), 543 (Aural Rehabilitation), and 526 (Articulation/Phonology Disorders). Students will typically have completed the required courses by the end of their first fall semester. Students who completed graduate-level SLP courses prior to entering the MA program must still complete SLP 501 (Foundations of Research) plus three courses at WCU to qualify for degree candidacy, even though they will have completed more than 12 semester hours (and sometimes more than 15 hours) of coursework at the time of their application.
2. **GPA Criterion.** The 12+ semester hours must be completed with a GPA of at least 3.0.
3. **Departmental Requirement:** A student must complete the five [prerequisite courses](#) described earlier in this Handbook, including undergraduate courses to meet standards IV-A1 (Biology), IV-A2 (physics or chemistry), IV-A3 (statistics), and IV-A4 (lifespan development) and the neurology of speech, language, and hearing. If a student did not complete one or more of these courses in their undergraduate program, they must complete the course(s) during the summer prior to entering the graduate program (preferred) or by the end of the first spring semester of their graduate program.

KASA Standards

The SLP graduate program prepares students for their Clinical Fellowship (CF), which is a requirement for earning ASHA's Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language

Pathology (CCC-SLP). To qualify for the CF, students must demonstrate that they have achieved all of the KASA standards defined by ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) <https://www.asha.org/certification/2020-slp-certification-standards/>.

Students will acquire KASA knowledge standards in academic courses and KASA skill standards in clinical/affiliation courses. To meet any KASA standard, a student must receive a performance code of "T" or "A." The code of "T" (Target) indicates that a standard was met on the initial assessment. A code of "A" (Acceptable) indicates that the standard was met following remediation. A code of "U" (Unacceptable) indicates that the student failed to meet the standard, even after remediation. The performance code awarded to a student for a given KASA standard will be determined by a course instructor (for a knowledge standard) or by a clinical instructor/supervisor (for a skill standard). If a KASA standard is not met after two remediations, the student must re-take the course in which it is addressed.

The **performance criteria** for receiving a code of "T" for a standard or a set of standards are defined explicitly in the syllabus of each academic and clinical course. Students receive feedback throughout a course regarding their performance on tasks designed to measure their acquisition of specific KASA standards. If a student fails to earn a "T" for a particular knowledge standard in an academic course, a **remediation plan** will be developed by the instructor of the course for that standard. If a student fails to meet a skill standard in their first practicum course, they will have additional opportunities to meet the standard in subsequent practicum courses. Again, if performance standards are not met after two remediations, the student must re-take the course or the clinical practicum.

Tracking KASA Standards Via CALIPSO

Tracking student progress is a crucial feature of the SLP graduate program. A web-based, FERPA-compliant password-protected system known as **CALIPSO** (Clinical Assessment of Learning Inventory of Performance Streamlined Office Operations) is used for this purpose. The program documents each student's progress toward the achievement of KASA standards and the number of clinical clock hours earned for clinical practicum. Students may view their progress at any time.

About one week after the Orientation, each student will receive an email prompt to register for CALIPSO. Registration involves a one-time of \$125 fee per student. Once students are registered, they have continuous access to information about their progress on KASA standards and the accumulation of clinical clock hours throughout the MA program.

Two types of KASA standards are documented on CALIPSO: (1) Knowledge Standards addressed in didactic courses and (2) Skill Standards addressed in clinical practicum courses. The documentation process works somewhat differently for each type of standard.

Knowledge Standards. For each student, the documentation of didactic KASA standards begins prior to the first semester of graduate studies with a screening of each student's undergraduate transcript for courses that match program prerequisites (see [Prerequisite Courses](#) above). Students who have not completed the prerequisite courses receive a Prerequisite Screening Form which lists these prerequisites and the student's status with respect to each. It also prompts students to document a plan for completing missing prerequisites. Some prerequisites

(e.g., a course in neurology) must be met in the summer before graduate studies begin (preferably) or by the end of fall semester of the first year. Other prerequisites (e.g., courses in biology, chemistry, physics, statistics, lifespan) should also be completed before the beginning of graduate studies (preferably) but no later than the end of the second semester. Once students register with CALIPSO, the Graduate Coordinator enters the results of each student's prerequisite screening into CALIPSO. Students who need to complete prerequisite standards will see that their evaluation of the Standards on CALIPSO are updated when the prerequisite is completed. Note that the completion of all prerequisite courses is a requirement of **degree candidacy** (see below), and degree candidacy is a requirement for graduation.

Documentation of the Knowledge Standards acquired in didactic courses is also entered into CALIPSO through a multi-step process. The syllabus of each course defines the Knowledge Standards to be addressed in a course, the method(s) of assessment, and the acquisition criteria. As students progress through a course, they receive feedback from the instructor about their performance on tasks that assess the standards. If remediations are involved, each remediation is documented on a corresponding remediation form signed by the instructor and the student. At the end of each semester, each student's acquisition of knowledge standards is marked on CALIPSO for each course as having been completed (or not). If remediations were involved, the remediation forms will also be uploaded to CALIPSO. Documentation of knowledge standards acquisition on CALIPSO should be consistent with the feedback provided to each student in each course throughout a semester. If students have concerns about the documentation of Knowledge Standards on their CALIPSO profile, they should discuss this with the Graduate Coordinator.

Skill Standards via Simulation Tasks. Students may accumulate up to 75 clinical clock hours based on simulated clinical practice. Simulations are presented primarily in didactic courses through a web-based system known as Simucase and through 3D experiences with mannequins and standardized patients. Simulations provide students with opportunities to engage in risk free clinical problem solving. Each simulation experience involves three phases: an introduction (**prebrief**), a follow-up discussion (**debrief**) and an **interactive performance** as assigned by the instructor. After a student has completed each phase, they will earn a specified number of clock hours. These clock hours will be entered into CALIPSO by the student as a simulation related to the course, and the clock hours will be approved by the course instructor. At the end of the two-year graduate program, an evaluation form will be entered into CALIPSO listing the ages, disorders, and skill standards addressed by the simulation experiences cumulatively.

Skill Standards via Traditional Clinical Courses. During clinical practicum and affiliation courses, students will receive periodic feedback from their supervisors regarding their performance of clinical Skill Standards. As with Knowledge Standards, this feedback will involve a code of "T," "A," or "U," and students must earn a "T" or "A" for each Skill Standard. Additionally, students will earn clinical hours during each clinical course. For each clinical course, each student's evaluation will be documented on the "Evaluation of Student Clinician" form, and their clinical clock hours will be documented on a "Clinical Clock Hours Log." Each of these forms will be signed by the supervising clinician. It will then be up to each student to enter their evaluation results and clock hours into CALIPSO. The supervisor will then review the data entered by the student for final validation. Students will receive training on how this is done.

Please note: In clinical practicum courses, the Director of Clinical Services will make every effort to ensure that students are exposed to diverse clinical experiences that offer the opportunity to demonstrate every one of the clinical standards included in the KASA. However, in some rare instances, a KASA standard may pertain to a disorder-specific clinical skill that a student has not had the opportunity to demonstrate during any of their clinical practicum courses. In these rare instances, the WCU clinical supervisor for the student's last affiliation practicum will provide the student with alternative opportunities for meeting such a standard. These alternative opportunities may involve case study assignments (written or oral), role-play activities, or a SimuCase assignment. In all cases, the documentation of skill acquisition and clinical clock hours will follow the same protocol as described above for traditional clinical practicum and affiliation courses.

Graduation Clearance: At the end of each student's two-year program, the Graduate Coordinator will clear a student for graduation when the student's CALIPSO profile reflects the acquisition of all KASA standards. This will qualify the student to apply for the CF, which (as indicated above) is a prerequisite for earning the CCC-SLP. If a student does not meet all KASA standards, the Graduate Coordinator will not clear the student for graduation. In other words, **students who fail to meet even one KASA standard may lose their eligibility to qualify for CF and (subsequently) for CCC-SLP.** Therefore, it is important for you to review your KASA progress throughout the program.

Standards of Conduct

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner on campus and in affiliation settings. The standards of student conduct are described in the following locations:

- [The ASHA Code of Ethics](#)
- The Student Code of Conduct in the [Ram's Eye View](#)
- CSD The Student Conduct Policy ([Appendix D](#) of this Handbook)

The CSD Student Conduct Policy

The CSD Student Conduct Policy describes professional behavior expected of students in on- and off-campus settings. This policy is referenced in every syllabus, and a complete copy can be found in [Appendix D](#).

On-campus policies define standards of behavior expected in the department, classrooms and clinical practica relative to six issues:

- Interactions with academic and clinical faculty
- Interactions with faculty, administrators, and support staff at the department, college, and university levels
- Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values
- Adherence to class schedules
- Adherence to attendance and class participation policies
- Preparation for assignments

Off-campus policies define standards of behavior expected school-based and medically based affiliation settings related to the following issues:

- Appropriate interaction with WCU and affiliation supervisors
- Appropriate interaction with other affiliation site staff members and administrators
- Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values
- Adherence to policies and procedures defined by the affiliation sites
- Adherence to attendance and responsibility requirements
- Adherence to expected levels of preparedness.

Consequences of Conduct Violations

Most conduct violations are minor and can be resolved with a friendly reminder of the standards. If there is a need to address a conduct violation formally, due process procedures will be followed to protect the rights of students and faculty. These procedures involve four steps, and they are consistent with procedures described in the *Student Code of Conduct* of the Ram's Eye View. The process begins with Step 1 and continues until the problem is resolved. Resolution may occur at any step.

Step 1: When a faculty member or clinical supervisor observes a conduct violation, they will...

- Inform the student that a conduct violation has been observed.
 - Include an objective behavioral description of the violation.
 - Discuss the violation with the student in a supportive manner.
 - Provide an opportunity for the student to share their perspective on the violation.
 - Create a plan to avoid a similar violation (or perception thereof) in the future.
- It is recommended that the faculty/supervisor invite a second faculty member/supervisor to join the conversation.
 - For academic violations, the second faculty member/supervisor may be either the Graduate Coordinator (who also serves as the graduate student advisor) or the Department Chairperson.
 - For Clinic violations, the second faculty member/supervisor must be either the Clinic supervisor, Director of Clinical Services, Graduate Coordinator, or Department Chairperson.
- If a second faculty member/supervisor is invited to the meeting...
 - The student must be informed in advance and must be provided with the opportunity to invite an **advocate**.
 - During the meeting, the second faculty member and the advocate will serve as **passive observers** (refrain from participating in discussion)
 - The overarching goal of the meeting is to turn the apparent conduct disorder into a learning opportunity for the student and faculty member.

- If the tone of the meeting escalates in a negative manner, the student or the instructor may terminate the meeting and follow up (Step 2).
- At the end of Step 1, the faculty member will send a summary of the contents of the meeting to the student copied to the student's academic advisor (the Graduate Coordinator). This summary will not be placed in the student's academic file.
- If the Graduate coordinator receives more than one summary of a meeting at Step 1 for the same student, the potential for a pattern of inappropriate conduct will be discussed at the following faculty meeting.

Step 2: If the problem is not resolved at Step 1, the student should be referred to the Graduate Coordinator (who also serves as graduate student advisor).

- The possible outcomes of this meeting include:
 - Dismissal of the complaint.
 - A plan for remediation with the student and faculty member.
 - A written recommendation for remediation to be placed in the student's department file .
 - Follow-up to ensure completion of the remediation plan with the student & faculty member.
 - Documentation of the completion of the remediation plan in the student's academic file.
- If the Graduate Coordinator is the faculty member who initiated the complaint, the CSD Chairperson will oversee the Step 2 process.

Step 3: If the problem is not resolved with Step 2, then the instructor or the student may bring the issue to the Department Chair.

The possible outcomes of this meeting may include:

- Dismissal of the complaint.
- In cases of extreme ethical violations, such as cheating or plagiarism, a recommendation that the student be dismissed from the program.
- Completion of remediation activity as outlined above in Step 2.

Step 4: If the student disagrees with the decision of the CSD Chairperson, they may then appeal the decision to the Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences.

The Associate Dean's decision should be considered final unless other provisions are available as per university policy.

Advisement, Scheduling, and Student Records

Advisor

The graduate coordinator serves as the advisor for all graduate students.

Advisement Goals

- To support and monitor each student's progress towards key program milestones.
- **Completion of program prerequisites** – documented in the Prerequisite Form.
- **Maintenance of academic standards** – documented on RamPortal at the end of each semester.
- **Degree Candidacy** – documented on RamPortal.
- **Selection of Elective**
- **Achievement of KASA standards** – documented on CALIPSO.
- **Achievement of 400+ clinical clock hours** – documented on CALIPSO.

Note: The 25 observation hours you earned during your undergraduate program are not automatically added to the total number of clock hours on CALIPSO. That is because CALIPSO has no option for adding those hours. However, your documentation for having earned those hours is included in the Documents folder of your CALIPSO folder, and you may add those hours to the total number of clock hours documented by CALIPSO. For example, if CALIPSO states that you have earned 375 clinical clock hours, you may add 25 observation hours to that total to get the 400 needed to graduate. However, always maintain your documentation for those 25 observation hours in case you are asked for documentation of all hours included in your total.

- **Completion of ROSAs** – documented on D2L Advisement site and included in the electronic file maintained by the Graduate Coordinator.
 - Entry ROSA
 - ROSA 1
 - ROSA 2
- **Completion of Clinical Education Tasks** prompted on the Program Plans and described in [Appendix B](#)
 - Obtain Clearances – Fall, Year 1.
 - Renew Clearances – Fall, Year 2.
 - Apply for Teacher Candidacy – Fall, Year 2.
 - Obtain medical clearances for SLP 552 – Fall, Year 2.
 - Apply for Education Specialist Certification in SLP during the last month of the program.

- **Completion of SLP Praxis** – documentation is provided by ETS. Send a copy of your Score Report form to the Graduate Coordinator.
- **Intent to Graduate** – This form must be completed on RamPortal by June 1 of Year 2.
- **Graduation Clearance** – completed by the Graduate Coordinator based on the above evidence.

ADVISEMENT PROTOCOLS

Contact with the advisor will take multiple forms, each is described below.

Scheduled Group Advisement/Pro-Seminar Events (GAP) Meetings

GAP meetings will be scheduled once or twice a month during the first year of the program and once a month during the second year of the program. They will be used to discuss upcoming program requirements and to discuss professional clinical issues. These meetings are mandatory, and a calendar of specific meeting dates/times will be presented during the first week of classes.

Individual office visits

You are welcome to visit the Graduate Coordinator for an individual conference during scheduled office hours or at another time upon request. Either way, please send an email in advance to reserve a time.

MA Advisement Site on D2L

WCU provides all students with access to a web-based system known as **D2L (Desire to Learn)**. This system is used to present course material as well as advisement information. Follow these steps to access CSD's MA Advisement site:

- Go to www.wcupa.edu
- Click on Menu in the right-hand corner of the horizontal tool bar at the top of the screen and see the drop-down menu
- Click on D2L at the bottom of the drop-down menu
- Log in with your WCU email and password
- Click on the "Organizations" tab under "My courses"
- Click on the MA Advisement icon
- If you have trouble finding this link, please call the WCU Help Desk (610-436-3350).

The MA Advisement site is an important source of information about the program. Please tag the MA assignment site with a "pin" for ease of access.

Course Scheduling

The CSD secretary (Mary Kay Gormley) schedules classes for all graduate students based on the curriculum sequence described in this *Handbook*. Any deviation from this program plan requires the approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

Note: **Billing** for tuition is done through the WCU's Bursar's Office.

Textbooks and instructional materials can be obtained by going to the campus bookstore (Sykes Student Union), by calling the bookstore (610-436-BOOK), or by ordering online <https://www.wcucampusstore.com/>

Student Records

Information about student progress and performance can be found in the three locations described below.

RamPortal

RamPortal is a FERPA-compliant, password-protected online university website. On this website, students have individual password-enabled access to their records, including their transcript and their Degree Progress Report. Further, the transcript documents the completion of academic milestones, including Degree Candidacy, the Approved Program of Study Form, Teacher Candidacy, and Transfer Credits.

CALIPSO

CALIPSO stands for Clinical Assessment of Learning Inventory of Performance Streamlined Office Operation. It is a web-based, FERPA-compliant system for documenting the following information:

- Acquisition of knowledge and skill standards, including remediations as needed.
- Clinical clock hours in all clinical practicum courses and for simulations.
- Details about the characteristics of each client for whom a student delivered services
- Evaluation reports and remediation reports associated with clinical practicum courses

Academic Files

The following data are placed in each student's FERPA-compliant, password-protected online Academic File. Copies of each document are either generated by or provided to students.

- Application materials submitted by student during the admissions process (e.g., transcripts, personal statements, vitae, etc.)
- Program Plan - A copy is provided to each student when they enter the program.
- A prerequisites screening form
- Documentation of the completion of prerequisite courses
- Documentation of 25 clinical observation hours provided to the program by the student
- ROSA Results

- SLP Praxis Score Report forms
- Copies of awards or certificates (if any) given to a student by the Department (e.g., the BECS certificate)
- Documentation of conduct incidents (if any)

Students receive copies of all content that is included in their academic files, and it is their responsibility to maintain their own copies of this content. However, if a student loses one or more of their own copies, they may request copies from the Graduate Coordinator.

Important Academic Policies

Academic Policies are described in detail in the WCU Graduate Catalog at the following URL: <https://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/academic-policies-procedures/>. Unless otherwise specified, the following policies are based on this source.

Policies Regarding Transfer Courses

Note: The following information is based on the WCU's Graduate Catalog available on www.wcupa.edu. However, because the schedules for updating the SLP Graduate Student Handbook and WCU's Graduate Catalog are different, we ask that you verify the information provided below by reading the current issue of WCU's Graduate Catalog.

Transfer Courses and KASA Requirements

Students who wish to transfer a graduate course from another university for credit towards the graduate degree at WCU **must provide evidence of having met the KASA standards associated with the course content**. Note that this is an SLP program policy, not a university policy.

Transfer Course Restrictions

With one exception (see below) students who enter WCU's graduate program with an earned master's degree **in another discipline** cannot receive credit for courses that applied toward the completion of that MA degree program.

Exception to Transfer Course Restrictions

Students who enter the M.A. program with an earned graduate degree **in another discipline** may be given a waiver for SLP 501 (Foundations of Research) **if** they have successfully completed a research course as part of their degree program in the other discipline. However, WCU's policy does not permit students to apply credits earned in a graduate degree program at another university toward the graduate program at WCU. Therefore, if SLP 501 is waved, the student must take a 1-semester-hour, graduate-level elective course to earn the 63 semester hours required for the MA degree.

Criteria for Acceptance of Transfer Credits

The following conditions are the minimum requirements for acceptance of transfer credit:

1. The credits must have been earned at an accredited graduate school.
2. The courses taken must be approved by the department or program in which the applicant intends to enroll at West Chester University and by the graduate dean.
3. The maximum number of credits that may be transferred shall not exceed 20 percent of the total required for completion of the student's degree program, rounded to the next highest three-credit increment. **The total number of credits needed to complete the SLP graduate program is 63, and 20% of 63 is 12.6 or 15 hours when rounded to the next highest three-credit increment.**
4. The grade earned for courses to be transferred must be B or better (an "A" equals 4.0.).
5. An official transcript and an official course catalog description and syllabus must be submitted with a request for the approval of transfer credits. Transcripts must be sent directly to the Graduate School by the institution that granted the credits, and they must clearly indicate that the courses to be transferred are graduate courses for which graduate credit was given.
6. The courses for transfer must have been taken recently enough to fall within the six-year time limitation.
7. To receive Departmental approval for transferring a graduate course from another graduate institution, the student must provide the Graduate Coordinator with documentation for having met the KASA standards associated with the course content.

Time Limit on Transfer Credits

As indicated above, no transfer credit will be given for any courses completed more than six years prior to commencement of WCU's M.A. program in CSD.

Enrollment Policies

Continuous Enrollment

To remain in good standing, graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment (i.e., one or more semester hours each fall and spring) from the semester of matriculation through the semester of graduation. The only exception is for students on a leave of absence. All graduate students who have been admitted into a graduate program must maintain continuous registration each semester (except summer sessions) or must apply for a formal leave of absence. Graduate students who do not wish to register for formal course work, but who desire to maintain continuous enrollment, must register for GSR799, a noncredit registration category used to record the fact of continuous enrollment. Graduate students are not required to maintain matriculation during the summer sessions unless they intend to complete their final degree requirements during this period.

A **leave of absence** may be granted with the approval of the Department's **Graduate Coordinator** and the **Dean of Graduate Studies**. Leave of absence forms may be obtained at the Graduate School website. A leave of absence does not extend the six-year time limit for completion of all degree requirements.

Unless a graduate student is granted a leave of absence, they are ineligible to return until readmitted. A formal application for readmission must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School. Forms are available on the Graduate School Website.

Provisional Enrollment Status

Individuals who are admitted to the SLP graduate Program on a provisional enrollment basis without full matriculation must satisfy the deficiencies related to their provisional status and then apply for full matriculation. These students are responsible for meeting with the Graduate Coordinator before or during their first semester to develop a plan for remediating the provisions.

Notification of Withdrawal from Classes or from the SLP Program

If a student withdraws from a class, they must notify their instructor **in writing** of the intent to withdraw. A student who withdraws from a class without proper notification will receive a grade of F for that class at the end of the semester. If a student wishes to withdraw from the MA Program, they must notify the Department's Graduate Coordinator in writing of the intent to withdraw, prior to the withdrawal. A student who withdraws from the program without proper notification will not be readmitted.

Petitions for Exception to Policy

Department policies cannot cover all contingencies for all students. Therefore, exceptions are bound to arise. When they do, students have the right to petition the Department Graduate Committee for an exception to a policy. This does not guarantee approval, but it does ensure that the appeal will be given careful consideration.

Students requesting an **Exception to Departmental Policy** should address their request to the Graduate Coordinator and include the following information:

- Statement of the standard policy
- Statement of the requested exception
- Rationale for the request

The petition should be discussed with the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will then present the petition to the faculty. A written response will be sent to the student as soon as possible following deliberations.

Students requesting an **Exception to University Policy** should download and complete the Petition to Exception of Policy form from the website maintained by the Graduate School. The form must be signed by Graduate Coordinator and by the Department Chairperson before it can be submitted to the Graduate School.

Grade Appeals

If a student receives a grade that is believed to be unfair, the first course of action is for the student to discuss the concern with the instructor who assigned the grade for possible

resolution of the problem. If the discussion does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the student is free to pursue the issue further by following the University's grade appeals policy.

Grade appeals in the Department follow the guidelines published in the **University Graduate Catalog**. Please note that the grade appeals policy stipulates specific reasons for which a grade may be appealed and very strict time limits for each step of the appeals process. The procedures in the catalog must be strictly followed.

WCU References

When policies are changed at the University and/or Graduate School level, they will take precedence over policies stated in this *Handbook*. When such changes are announced by the University, students will be informed. However, in an abundance of caution, please verify a policy statement in the current edition of the following references when a policy becomes relevant to your situation.

- [WCU's current Graduate Catalog](#)
- [The Ram's Eye View](#)
- [Policies and forms on WCU's Graduate School web page](#)

Student Services

Students have access to a wide variety of services at WCU, and they are provided with a list of services through the Office of Graduate Studies when they are accepted into the program. Additionally, instructors may list some of these services at the end of their course syllabi.

The Student Support Center (<https://www.wcupa.edu/Support/default.aspx>) serves as a portal for all support services available to students. The website contains a Rammy Navigator where a student can find out how to connect with all University resources, including a success coach.

Below is a sampling of the supports that can be accessed through the **Rammy Navigator**:

- [Graduate School](#) – McKelvie Hall/ 610-436-2943
- [Graduate Student Association](#) – McKelvie Hall/ 610-436-2943
- [WCU Library System](#)
- [Office of Diversity Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Office of Educational Accessibility](#) (OEA) Lawrence Center/ 610-436-2564
- [Student Health Services](#) – Commonwealth Hall/ 610-436-2509
- [Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy](#) Sykes Student Union 610-436-3147
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) – Lawrence Center/ 610-436-2301
- [Learning Assistance Resource Center](#)
- [Speech and Hearing Clinic](#) – 201 Carter Drive; Ste. 400/ 610-436-3402
- [Dept. of Public Safety/Parking Services](#) – Peoples Building/ 610-436-3345
- [Student Support Center](#)

- [Center for Women and Gender Equity](#) – Lawrence Center/ 610-436-2122
- [Twardowski Career Development Center](#) – Lawrence Center/ 610-436-2501
- [Campus Recreation Center](#) – Student Recreation Center/ 610-436-1732
- [Off-Campus and Commuter Services](#) – Sykes Union/ 610-436-2209 or 2984
- [Financial Aid Office](#) – 25 University Avenue/ 610-436-2627
- [Bursar's Office](#) – 25 University Avenue/ 610-436-2552
- [Lawrence A. Dowdy Multicultural Center](#) – Sykes/ 610-436-3273
- [Information Services & Technology](#) – Peoples Building/ 610-436-3350
- [WCU Campus Store](#) – Sykes/ 610-436-2665
- [Sykes Student Union Building](#) (student community center) – Sykes/ 610-436-2984 or 3360
- [Veterans Center](#) – 624 S. High Street/ 610-436-2862
- [The Writing Center](#) - phone: 610-430-5664

Graduate Assistantships

Seven half-time Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are awarded by the Department of CSD to selected first-year students for the first academic year (fall and spring semesters). The selection process is based on a review of academic records and supplemental materials, such as a writing sample or interview.

Each GA is assigned to work with one or two faculty members for a total of 10 hours a week through the fall and spring semesters of their first year. Generally, GAs will be assigned work that enhances their understanding and repertoires of skills consistent with the field of CSD.

Other assistantships may be available in other academic departments. Students who wish to pursue these positions are encouraged to indicate their interest by contacting the Graduate School at this URL: https://www.wcupa.edu/_admissions/sch_dgr/assistantships.aspx

NSSLHA

The Department sponsors an active chapter of the **National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA)** that is open to both undergraduate and graduate student membership. When students enroll as a member of the national organization, they automatically become a member of WCU's chapter.

Membership in the national organization entitles students to all the professional journals that ASHA publishes, as well as to special privileges, such as newsletters and reduced rates for convention registration. The journals are valuable tools for graduate and professional work and are available to students for a fraction of the cost to full ASHA members.

WCU's NSSLHA chapter offers a variety of activities during the school year. In the past, this has included social activities (e.g., picnics, holiday parties) and educational functions (e.g., guest

speakers, an annual conference). The chapter, in conjunction with the departmental faculty, also and awards the Vincent Suppan scholarship to a deserving undergraduate student.

Officers for WCU's NSSLHA chapter are elected each year by the undergraduate and graduate students in the Department. Graduate students are encouraged to engage in all aspects of the NSSLHA organization.

Program Assessment and Growth

The CSD faculty is continually engaged in program assessment and in the use of assessment data for making improvements when indicated. Graduate students within the program have multiple opportunities to participate in these assessment activities. Some of feedback will be sought in the form of periodic surveys as follows:

- Assessment of academic instruction
- Assessment of clinical instruction within WCU's Speech and Hearing Clinic
- Assessment of clinical instruction in affiliation sites
- Assessment of the graduate program overall

Students will also be asked to share their perceptions in less formal ways through interaction with the faculty:

- Attending an annual focus group meeting to contextualize survey responses.
- Meeting with the Graduate Coordinator at any time to discuss programmatic concerns.

As noted above, when students register to take the **SLP Praxis (5331)**, we ask that they designate WCU as a recipient of the score report by including the **Recipient Code (R-Code) of RA0267** on the registration form and to provide the Graduate Coordinator with a copy of their **Score Report Form**. This enables the Department track student success rates and to adjust the curriculum if the success rates fall below standards.

After graduation, alumni are asked to complete a survey to evaluate their satisfaction with the pre-professional preparation they received at WCU. When alumni later become employers or supervisors of program graduates, they are asked for feedback regarding the professional performance of the alumni or current graduate students.

The feedback provided by graduate students and alumni is extremely important to the program. It provides a means of identifying program strengths and needs. The information is used to reinforce and/or modify aspects of the program so that students will continue to receive the best possible education to support their future success in the profession. Therefore, students and alumni are urged to take this assessment process seriously, to provide feedback when it is requested, and to volunteer feedback when a need arises.

Complaints about the Program

Every student has the right to seek redress for a complaint about the graduate program as a whole or any aspects thereof. If the problem is with the overall program, the first level of complaint should be with the Graduate Coordinator. If the problem pertains to a particular course or practicum, the student should first seek resolution by communicating with the

respective **instructor** or **supervisor**. If a resolution cannot be found, the next level of complaint rests with either the **Graduate Coordinator** (if the complaint pertains to the academic program) or with the **Director of Clinical Services** (if the complaint pertains to the clinical education component). If the problem is still not resolved at this level, the student may bring their complaint to the **CSD Chairperson**. If a student feels that adequate redress of the complaint has not been achieved at the Department level, they are free to file a complaint with the **Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences**. Below is a summary of the hierarchy of individuals who should be consulted when a student has a complaint.

Level 1. The course instructor or the clinical supervisor for a didactic or clinical course, respectively

Level 2. The Graduate Coordinator or Director of Clinical Services

Level 3. The CSD Chairperson

Level 4. The Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences

Students must follow this hierarchy. They will be asked, by each person in the hierarchy (beginning at level 2) if they have addressed the problem at the previous level.

A complaint about any program accredited by ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) may be submitted in writing by any student, instructional staff member, audiologist, speech-language pathologist and/or member of the public to the CAA at the following address:

Chair, Council on Academic Accreditation
 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
 2200 Research Boulevard, #310
 Rockville, MD 20850-3289
 Phone: (800) 498-2071

Complaints from students or faculty/instructional staff members must be submitted using the CAA's complaint form accompanied by documentation showing that all institutional grievance and review mechanisms have been exhausted before they are submitted to the CAA. A complaint must clearly describe the specific nature of the violation of accreditation standards, and it must provide supporting data for the charge. Additional procedural details can be found at <https://caa.asha.org/programs/complaints/>.

Appendix A: Core Functions of Candidates for Graduate Program Admission and Continuance

(6.10.24)

WCU's Department of CSD offers three programs: a Bachelor of Arts (BA) program, a Pre-graduate Certification Program (PCP), and a Master of Arts (MA) program. The mission of these programs is to provide students with the academic coursework and clinical practicum experiences required by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) in fulfillment of the requirements for the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). The education of a speech-language pathologist requires the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and the development of judgment through client care experience in preparation for independent decision-making practices. Additionally, the current practice of SLP emphasizes interprofessional collaboration with professionals in education, rehabilitation, and medical settings.

POLICIES INFLUENCING THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

WCU's graduate program in SLP is accredited for Speech-Language Pathology by ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. Operating within the scope of ASHA standards, the Department has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for (1) selecting students, (2) designing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum, (3) evaluating student progress, and (4) determining who should be awarded a degree.

CSD Faculty and professional staff also have a responsibility for the welfare of clients tested, treated, or otherwise affected by CSD students. The Department has a responsibility to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent SLP professionals, capable of delivering quality services in a timely manner and preserving the wellbeing of the clients they serve. Thus, it is important that the persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice SLP.

The Department of CSD, as part of the College of Health Sciences, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. **The University, College, and Department do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran status. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with a diagnosed disability.** The CSD faculty and professional staff have responsibility for the welfare of students in the Department and for the clients the students treat in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. To meet this responsibility, the Department has established academic standards and minimum core functions (defined on the following pages) that must be demonstrated by students with or without reasonable accommodations to participate in and to complete the program successfully. Students with conditions that may require accommodations will be referred to the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) for a determination of whether the condition is a disability as defined by applicable laws, and for a determination of reasonable

accommodations. The determination will specifically take into consideration whether the requested accommodation might jeopardize the safety of clinic clients or the ability of the student to complete the classroom, laboratory, and clinical work required for the CSD graduate program. The OEA will make this determination with input from the Department of CSD. Whenever possible, reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to enable them to meet these standards and ensure that they are not denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination.

DESCRIPTION OF CORE FUNCTIONS

The Department of CSD selects applicants with evidence of the potential to become highly competent SLP professionals. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory prior and ongoing academic achievement but also on non-academic factors that support the candidate's performance of the core functions of the academic and clinical program required for graduation. **Core functions**, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities that support mastery of the curriculum and of the professional attributes required of all students at graduation. Core functions are described below in relation to six areas: **physical and behavioral/emotional health; and motor, sensory, communication, intellectual/cognitive** (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis), **and professional skills**.

1. Physical Health

With or without reasonable accommodation, a student must possess the physical health and stamina needed to carry out the SLP Program. The student must be able to continuously sit or stand for at least 3 hours at a time.

2. Motor Skills

With or without reasonable accommodation, a student must have sufficient motor function so that they can (1) access transportation to and within all academic settings and clinical affiliations, (2) process relevant academic and clinical information (e.g., take notes during class and client interviews, type/dictate papers and clinic reports, participate in classroom discussions and client counseling sessions, give oral presentations, model the production of speech, etc.), (3) use a computer keyboard to operate clinical and laboratory equipment, and to (4) execute movements required to provide with acuity, accuracy, and facility complete speech/language and dysphagia evaluations and to provide therapeutic services to clients of all ages and genders across a full range of clinical and educational contexts.

3. Sensory Skills

With or without reasonable accommodation, a student must have sufficient vision and hearing to observe effectively in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. Hearing (aided or unaided) must be functional for the speech frequencies. Students must be able to master information presented in course work through lectures, and recorded audio signals, including subtle discriminations involving individual phonemes, phoneme sequences, words, larger language segments, and suprasegmental features of speech. Vision (aided or unaided) must be sufficient to allow for the processing of written materials, projected video

segments, laboratory demonstrations, and demonstrations in the clinical training portion of the program. When performing clinical evaluations and treatments, the student must be able to observe a client sufficiently from a range of 1 to 10 feet to identify nonverbal communication signals (e.g., body orientation, joint attention, facial expressions, conventional gestures, manual signs, proxemics cues). The student must further be able to read a case history and to perform a visual evaluation of various oral, manual, and cranio-facial structures (i.e., ear, throat, oral cavity, skull, etc.) and functions (e.g., individual oral-motor movements, swallow patterns, articulatory gestures, manual gestures, facial expressions, visual gaze patterns, body postures, etc.). The student must have sufficient sensory capability to perform all required evaluations and treatment protocols using instruments and tools necessary for accurate, efficient, and timely completion of such activities, including the ability to interpret video swallow studies.

4. Communication Skills

With or without reasonable accommodations, a student must demonstrate communication skills sufficient to achieve effective clinical and professional interaction with individuals served. For oral communication, students must demonstrate speech and language skills in English, which, at a minimum, are consistent with ASHA's most current position statement on students and professionals who speak English with accents and nonstandard dialects. For written communication, students must be able to produce and comprehend technical reports, diagnostic and treatment reports, treatment plans, and professional correspondence. Information must be communicated in a succinct yet comprehensive manner and in settings (e.g., hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools) where time for verbal reporting and/or written documentation may be limited. These skills require the ability to assess and effectively communicate all relevant information, including the significance of nonverbal responses. Also required is the ability to communicate the need for appropriate, well-focused follow-up as appropriate during or immediately following the completion of an assessment. The student must be capable of responsive, empathic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences. The student must express their ideas clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.

5. Cognitive Skills

With or without reasonable accommodations, the student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses at a level consistent with standards defined in a course syllabus, the Clinic Handbook, or standards defined by an affiliation site. These skills may be described as the ability to comprehend, memorize, integrate, analyze, synthesize, and apply material. They must be able to demonstrate reasoning and decision-making skills needed for problem solving appropriate to the practice of SLP.

6. Behavioral/Emotional Health

With or without reasonable accommodations, the student must be able to demonstrate progress in analytical, decision-making, and time-management skills needed to complete all tasks involved in the diagnosis and treatment of communication and swallowing disorders.

In addition, they must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with individuals served, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all conditions including highly stressful situations that may be associated with some clinical contexts. The student must have the emotional stability to function effectively under the typical stresses of clinical settings and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways. The student must know if their values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and/or experiences affect their perceptions and relationships with others. The student must be willing and able to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with productive individual or team relationships. The student must possess skills and experience necessary for effective and harmonious relationships in diverse learning and working environments.

7. Professional Skills

With or without reasonable accommodations, a student's emotional health must be sufficient to perform the above tasks, including the use of good judgment and behavior that is professional, reliable, mature, and responsible. The student must effectively manage the use of time and be able to systematize actions to complete professional and technical tasks with realistic constraints. The student must be adaptable, possessing sufficient flexibility to function in new and stressful environments. They must be able to critically evaluate their own performance, be forthright about errors, accept constructive criticism, and look for ways to improve their performance in the classroom and clinic. The student must show respect for individuals of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, religions, sexual orientations, and disabilities across the diverse spectrum of communicative disorders. The student must exhibit professional behavior by conforming to appropriate standards of dress, appearance, language, and public behavior. The student must uphold the Code of Ethics of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association and WCU's standards of academic honesty. **It is expected that the development of essential professional skills will grow over the course of the program with the support of faculty through a combination of direct instruction, modeling, and constructive performance feedback.**

Every student's progress is reviewed twice during the academic year by the entire faculty: once in the fall and once in spring semesters, respectively. This is known as the "MA Review" involving the consideration of (1) progress in the completion of prerequisite skills, (2) grades earned in academic and clinical courses and (3) progress toward the acquisition of knowledge and skills addressed in each course as documented on the web-based, FERPA-compliant, password protected system called Clinical Assessment of Learning Inventory of Performance Streamlined Office Operations (CALIPSO). The knowledge and skills standards are established by ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) as prerequisites for the Clinical Fellowship (CF), and the CF is a requirement for earning the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP). Knowledge and skill standards are addressed in courses across the curriculum, and each course syllabus lists the knowledge or skills standards for that course. If a student fails to meet a knowledge and skill standard, the course instructor develops a remediation plan. If the student does not meet the criterion on a remediation (with or without reasonable accommodations determined by OEA in collaboration with the Department), the student will be advised to either write a paper, re-enroll in the course, or discontinue the MA

program. Students who do not meet the KASA standards will not be eligible for the post-graduate Clinical Fellowship, or for the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC), which is the entry-level credential for SLPs as determined by ASHA.

Academic standards are defined in WCU's [Graduate Catalog](#). All students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. If a student's GPA falls below this standard despite reasonable accommodations if needed (as determined by the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities), they will be placed on probation and required to bring their GPA up to at least a 3.0 in the following semester. Students who fail to bring their cumulative GPA up to at least a 3.0 will be dismissed from the university.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT STATEMENT

As a matriculated student in the West Chester University's Speech-Language Pathology MA program, my signature below indicates that I have read all 4 pages of the Core Functions document; that I agree with its contents; that I am committed to the policies expressed therein; and that I may be advised to discontinue the program should I fail to demonstrate all of the Core Functions despite reasonable accommodations (if recommended by OEA) and reasonable levels of support from the faculty.

Student's Name (printed):

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

WCU's Core Functions Policy is adapted from the following sources:

Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD, 2023). The new Core Functions Document: A guide for engaging in supportive student conversations. Webinar conducted on December 12, 2023.

Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD, 2023). A guide for future practitioners in audiology and speech-language pathology: Core Functions. Retrieved on 6/10/24. <https://growthzonecmsprodeastus.azureedge.net/sites/1782/2023/04/Core-Functions-for-AUD-and-SLP-Approved-4-3-23-rev-4-25-23-4b25d025-b102-44d3-80ee-2323381d68ab.pdf>

Appendix B: Applying for Teacher Candidacy and PA Ed. Spec. Cert. in SLP Procedures

1. Apply for Teacher Candidacy (leading to the PA Ed Spec Cert in SLP)

This must be done early during the first semester of the second year in the SLP program.

The **Teacher Candidacy Application form** outlines the necessary course work and academic plan for certification. A copy of the form is available below and on D2L's MA Advisement site under Ed Spec Cert in SLP.

2. Complete Required Coursework

Students must complete all basic courses required for the MA core curriculum and all coursework required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The required PDE courses are embedded in the SLP curriculum.

3. Apply for three clearances

NOTE:

- The **clearances** described below are required for ALL clinical experiences (in-house clinicals and affiliations), and they are **valid for only one calendar year**.
- Application must be completed to cover the period during which the student will be enrolled in clinical practicum and in clinical affiliations.
- Prior to the school affiliation, you must have your original clearances scanned at the College of Education scanning station.
- Additional details regarding clearances are provided on the [College of Education and Social Work website](#). (This website also provides access to the forms needed to complete the clearances described below.)

a) ACT 34 Compliance (Criminal History Record Information)

Each student must submit a **Criminal History Record Information** form from the PA State Police. This form documents that the State Police Central Repository contains no criminal information pertaining to the student. The criminal record history report must be no more than one (1) year old. Students must show the original report to the administrator at the school affiliation site.

b) ACT 151 (PA Child Abuse History Clearance)

Each student must submit a copy of an official clearance statement obtained from the PA Department of Public Welfare or a statement from the Department of Public Welfare that no record exists. The clearance statement must be no more than one (1) year old. The student must show the original report to the administrator at the school affiliation site.

c) ACT 114 (FBI Clearance)

This requires fingerprinting. Once completed, it's important to bring and save the 2-page unofficial copy. You will not receive a paper copy in the mail.

4. Apply for the PA Educational Specialist Certification in SLP via TIMS

Note: The official name of this certification is **Educational Specialist I – School Speech & Language Pathologist PK-12 certificate in PA**. It is listed on the PDE website under [“Educational Specialist Certificates - Type Code 31.”](#)

Do not begin your application until the last month in your graduate program.

You will receive a reminder from the Graduate Coordinator before graduation with a reminder and instructions for making this application.

The application process involves four parts:

- Request a letter of completion by supplying information at this URL: [Letter of Completion](#)
- [Watch a video](#) about how to register with the Teacher Information Management System (TIMS)
- [Register for TIMS](#) – A registration fee of ~ \$200 will be requested
- Create your TIMS profile.

5. Wait for your certification to be processed

Processing involves three steps:

- WCU's Graduate School will send documentation of your graduation to the College of Education (COE).
- The COE will send paperwork to PDE.
- PDE will process your paperwork and then send you your certification.

Processing takes time:

- PDE typically receives many similar applications at the end of each academic year, so, you may not receive your certificate immediately.
- If an employer asks you for validation that you have completed the requirements to qualify for the Certification before you receive the official document, you may ask the Graduate Coordinator to write a letter of validation.

West Chester University

Teacher Candidacy Form

Post-baccalaureate

Instructions:

- Application to Teacher Candidacy (Ed Spec Cert in SLP) must be completed no later than one full semester before your school-based affiliation begins.
- On page 1 of this form, provide the following information:
 1. Name, phone number, student ID number
 2. Check “yes” if you already have a PA instruction I certification and attach a copy.
 3. Sign and date page 1 under ‘certification student’s signature’
- On page 2 of this form, indicate the courses you have completed and when you will complete the rest.
- Download your WCU transcript showing graduate courses and sign each page.
- Obtain an official copy of your undergraduate transcript with conferral date.
- Create a single document that includes all 4 items (page 1 of this form, page 2 listing courses, undergraduate transcript, graduate transcript).
- Send the single document to the Graduate Coordinator.

Name _____ Student ID _____
(LAST, First)

Phone # (cell) _____ (home) _____ Certification Area: Speech Language Pathology

Check (✓):

yes* no The candidate has a valid PA Instructional Certificate (either level I or II)
*subject: _____

The candidate is pursuing certification in a graduate program that leads to a MA degree and is approved for Teacher Candidacy

The candidate is pursuing the following certification:

✓ Educational Specialist in SLP (requires ASHA Praxis Exam only)

~~~~~

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Certification Student’s Signature) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Professional Advisor’s Signature – CSD Dr. Koenig) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(WCU Certification Officer’s Signature) (Date)

Office use only: \_\_\_\_\_  
PDE code PS code Date Initials

## Checklist of Requirements for Teacher Candidacy

For each set course, indicate courses the semester in which you have received credit or the semester in which you plan to complete courses for which you have not yet received credit.

### Communication Sciences and Disorders Curriculum

| Course # | Course Title                                              | Semester Credit Received | Semester Scheduled to Take |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| SLP501   | Foundations of Research in Speech Pathology               |                          |                            |
| SLP511   | Child Language Disorders I                                |                          |                            |
| SLP512   | Child Language Disorders II                               |                          |                            |
| SLP 515  | Adult Neurogenic Speech Disorders                         |                          |                            |
| SLP516   | Adult Neurogenic Communication Disorders                  |                          |                            |
| SLP523   | Voice Disorders                                           |                          |                            |
| SLP524   | Fluency Disorders                                         |                          |                            |
| SLP526   | Clinical Articulation & Phonology                         |                          |                            |
| SLP543   | Therapy for the Hearing Impaired                          |                          |                            |
| SLP551   | Graduate Clinical Practicum (Speech/Language Therapy) I   |                          |                            |
| SLP551   | Graduate Clinical Practicum (Speech/Language Therapy) II  |                          |                            |
| SLP551   | Graduate Clinical Practicum (Hearing)                     |                          |                            |
| SLP551   | Graduate Clinical Practicum (Speech/Language Diagnostics) |                          |                            |
| SLP582   | Dysphagia                                                 |                          |                            |
| SLP 545  | Augmentative and Alternative Communication                |                          |                            |
| SLP575   | Medical Speech Pathology                                  |                          |                            |
| SLP552   | Medical Affiliation Practicum                             |                          |                            |
| SLP570   | School Language Speech and Hearing Programs               |                          |                            |
| SLP553   | School-based Affiliation Practicum                        |                          |                            |
|          | Graduate Elective:                                        |                          |                            |

## Appendix C: Writing a Thesis

### General Facts about Thesis Work

A thesis is a formal, written document which describes one of the following:

- an original empirical study
- a replication of an empirical study
- a modification or extension of an existing empirical study
- the development of a theoretical construct
- a state-of-the art literature review

Thesis work is an option for all students in the graduate SLP program. It may be initiated at any time during the program and completed after the student is admitted to Degree Candidacy. However, it is strongly recommended that students initiate their thesis work during their first semester of graduate school. A natural starting point for thinking about thesis research is during the first semester of the MA program when students are enrolled in SLP 501 (Foundations of Research). One feature of this course is a review of the existing research literature, and this review may lead to a thesis research project.

The Graduate School defines the following features of thesis work: Deadlines, forms and Templates, Submission, Binding, and other FAQs. This information is provided at the following URL: [https://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admissions/SCH\\_DGR/thesis.aspx](https://www.wcupa.edu/_admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx). Students considering the thesis option should visit this page and familiarize themselves with the Graduate School's requirements.

### Selecting the Thesis Option

The decision to engage in a thesis project should be discussed first with the student's academic advisor (the Graduate Coordinator). As indicated above, this should be done, ideally, by the completion of SLP 501 (Foundations of Research).

Once a decision has been made to elect the thesis option, the student should choose a **Thesis Committee Chair** (see below), a **Thesis/Examining Committee** (see below), and complete the **Request for Approval of Master's-Degree Thesis Examining Committee** form. This form is available on D2L's MA Advisement site under "Thesis Material." It must be completed and submitted to WCU's Graduate Office. A copy must be given to the student's academic advisor who will place it in the student's academic folder.

### Selecting a Thesis Topic

Thesis topics are conceived in many ways. Below is a list of some examples:

- Completion of the literature review assignment in SLP 501 may lead to a research project.
- Information gained in content courses may expose an area of interest that needs to be developed.
- A research article or series of articles may suggest some unanswered questions.

- Clinical practicum experiences may lead to questions about the evidence base for therapy approaches.
- Informal discussions with instructors and/or peers may lead to a research question.
- Ideas for research may be revealed by a speaker presenting at a professional conference.
- A faculty member may invite a student to develop/carry out a study related to their content area.

Whatever the source of an idea, the development of a research question is always a work in progress. Students often begin by identifying a general area of interest, or by raising a general question which they want to study. Then, the topic is refined through review of the literature and discussions with the thesis advisor, other instructors, peers, and others. For many students, the selection of a topic is one of the most difficult aspects of the thesis process.

### Time Required to Complete a Thesis

Most students require at least three full academic semesters to complete their thesis work. However, the exact number of semesters required by an individual student may vary. Below is a list of common variables:

- the nature of a particular research project
  - the clarity with which a research question is defined at the beginning of the project
  - the complexity of a study
  - the availability of participants
  - the resources a student brings to the task (e.g., motivation, organization, self-discipline, time management)
- The table below summarizes a timeline for critical tasks that must be completed by students who identify a thesis project.

#### *Timeline for writing a thesis*

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Fall Semester   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a research proposal</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Spring Semester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select a thesis committee chair</li> <li>• Select a thesis committee</li> <li>• Begin writing formal prospectus for approval by committee</li> </ul>                    |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Summer          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize the formal prospectus</li> <li>• Receive committee approval for the research plan</li> <li>• Complete the paperwork needed to begin data collection</li> </ul> |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall Semester   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data</li> <li>• Analyze data</li> <li>• Write the thesis</li> </ul>                                                                                             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Spring Semester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defend thesis before the committee</li> <li>• Make changes if requested by the committee</li> <li>• Submit thesis to the Graduate Office</li> </ul>                     |



## Selecting a Thesis Director

A Thesis Director is a member of the CSD faculty who serves as a mentor to the student and is a key member of a student's Thesis Committee (also known as the Examining Committee). Below is a list of tasks for which a thesis advisor is responsible:

- Helping a student to establish a timetable for completing the thesis
- Guiding the student through each phase of the development of the thesis
- Assisting the student in choosing the other members of their Thesis Committee
- Informing the student of important policies, procedures, and deadlines associated with the thesis.
- Serving as a resource person and troubleshooter.

The choice of a Thesis Director is entirely up to a student. Naturally, students should select a member of the CSD faculty with whom they feel they can work well, someone who has expertise in the content area of the thesis and who has the time to serve as a mentor.

Before selecting a thesis Director, students are encouraged to interview members of the faculty who might serve in this capacity. Students should assess each faculty member's interest in a particular topic and the time to serve as a mentor throughout the thesis project. During this interview, most faculty members will expect a student to provide them with (a) an oral description of their thesis research idea, and (b) a writing sample (usually the first draft of the prospectus). Note that a faculty member may accept or decline an invitation to serve as thesis Director.

## Selecting a Thesis Committee (aka Examining Committee)

A Thesis/Examining Committee must be comprised of least three individuals, including the Thesis Director (see description above) and two or three additional faculty members. One of the two additional faculty members must be from CSD. The second member may be from CSD, from another department, or from another university or off-campus facility (e.g., a research laboratory, medical facility, school, etc.).

Students should collaborate with their Thesis Director in selecting additional committee members. Committee members are typically selected for their ability to contribute to some aspect of the thesis project (e.g., content, statistical analysis, etc.) and for their availability at key points in the process.

Below is a list of tasks for which members of a Thesis/Examination Committee are responsible.

- Evaluate the formal prospectus and determine whether it merits approval
- Ask questions that support a student's thesis project
- Serve as a resource, as appropriate, to different aspects of the thesis project
- Participate during the Oral Defense (see below) and determine (by vote) whether the thesis merits approval

Once a student has chosen their committee, they must complete the Research and Compliance form provided on the Graduate School web page under Thesis and Doctoral Culminating projects- Forms: [https://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admissions/SCH\\_DGR/thesis.aspx](https://www.wcupa.edu/_admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx)

## Developing a Thesis Prospectus

Recall that a thesis project may involve research, a state-of-the-art literature review, or a theoretical treatise. A **prospectus** is essentially a "game plan" for a thesis project. While the idea may be developed in various ways, the formal prospectus is generally developed in collaboration with the Thesis Director and one or more members of the Thesis/Examining Committee. The content of a prospectus will vary somewhat, depending on the type of thesis that a student is writing.

A **research prospectus** is a formal, written document which includes the following components:

- Statements about the importance of the topic you wish to explore
- A review of the theoretical and technical literature on the topic
- A summary of the gaps left by the current literature
- A statement of the research objectives
- A description of the research design
- A hypothesis regarding the expected outcomes

The prospectus for a **state-of-the-art literature review** or **theoretical treatise** must describe, in detail, a solid rationale for the proposed work and plan for completing it.

All documents **must conform to acceptable rules of format and style** (see guidelines for style and formatting, below). Students may also wish to review thesis documents written by previous students.

## Oral Defense of Prospectus

Once the prospectus has been written and approved by the Thesis Director, a formal meeting of the Thesis/Examining Committee must be held to determine if the formal prospectus is acceptable. **Members of the Thesis/Examining Committee should receive the written document of a formal prospectus at least two weeks prior to the Prospectus Meeting.** At the time of the meeting, the student should be prepared to defend their prospectus in an oral examination format. Implementation of the plan described in the prospectus may not proceed until the prospectus has been defended and the Thesis/Examining Committee has given its approval.

## Regulations Regarding the Research Process

Thesis research often involves participants (subjects) who are located at off campus sites. In addition, research may involve clinical or laboratory instrumentation available at off-campus facilities. Within this context, student researchers must (a) adhere to the policies and regulations of the external agency or institution with which they are collaborating and (b) comply with all Federal, State, University, and Department policies regarding the research process.

## Guidelines for the Treatment of Subjects

Strict Federal and University guidelines exist concerning the treatment of human and animal subjects. Students who are planning to conduct research involving the use of subjects must first review the “**Guidelines for Submitting Protocols to the Human Subjects Committee and Application Package.**” This document, together with supporting application forms, is provided by the **Human Subjects Committee** of WCU’s **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** at the Office of Sponsored Research. To see these documents, please visit and review information on the following website: <http://www.wcupa.edu/research/>. Students who are planning to collect data at an off-campus site with its own IRB must also comply with the requirements of the site’s IRB standards and protocol.

## Off-campus Contacts

Students who are planning to conduct research at an off-campus site or to draw subjects from agencies and institutions in the community, do so as a representative of WCU and of CSD. To protect all parties, on- and off-campus, students must receive approval for all off-campus contacts. Letters, phone calls, and personal meetings are subject to approval by the Thesis Advisor. This coordination is essential since there are legal, ethical, political, and practical ramifications to off-campus contacts and commitments.

## Style and Format Guidelines for Writing a Thesis

A thesis must be written in the format and style of professional journals in the field of communication sciences and disorders. This style is described in the ***Style Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 7<sup>th</sup> Edition***. Copies of this manual are available in the University bookstore. Further, WCU’s Graduate School has additional requirements that must be followed. Details are available at this URL: [https://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admissions/SCH\\_DGR/thesis.aspx](https://www.wcupa.edu/_admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx)

## Oral Defense of Thesis

After a thesis has been written and approved by the Thesis Director, the student must participate in an Oral Defense of their work. The participants in the defense include all Thesis Committee members and any other faculty members or students who wish to attend. The student must establish a date for the Oral Defense by coordinating with all Thesis Committee members. Copies of the thesis must be given to each Thesis Committee member by the student at least two weeks prior to the date of the Oral Defense. Additionally, the student should invite other faculty and students to the Oral Defense once the date is established.

At the Oral Defense, a student may be asked questions pertaining to any aspect of thesis content. During the Oral Defense of a research project, the discussion often turns to alternative interpretation of data, ways to extend the research that has been conducted, and future studies that can be planned. The Oral Defense is an opportunity for a lively and productive scholarly discussion.

At the end of the Oral Defense, students are typically provided with feedback from committee members regarding the content and style of their thesis. It is not unusual for students to be

asked to revise some aspect of the written document following the Oral Defense. Final approval by the committee, all of whom must sign an approval sheet that is included in the thesis, is given when the revised document is accepted by all committee members.

### **Critical Milestones for Thesis Completion**

A table called “[Critical Milestones & Checklist for Thesis Completion](#)” (next page) summarizes the specific tasks that must be done by students electing to write a thesis, and the sequence in which the tasks must be done. While there may be some minor variations in the timeline, these milestones represent the typical sequence of events for students engaged in thesis research. The Critical Milestones & Checklist table is intended to be used by the student, their Thesis Director, and their academic advisor so that all individuals are clear about their responsibilities and so that task completion can be tracked.

It is extremely important that students who wish to write a thesis read the cardinal documents regarding thesis research at WCU during the first fall semester of their graduate studies:

- Check the Graduate School website to review all information under the Thesis and Doctoral Culminating Projects web page: [https://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admissions/SCH\\_DGR/thesis.aspx](https://www.wcupa.edu/_admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx)
- Any research involving human subjects must be approved by WCU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please visit the IRB website for information about procedures to be followed: [https://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admin/research/irb.aspx](https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/research/irb.aspx)

The best foundation for the successful completion of a thesis is a full understanding of the tasks required.

### Critical Milestones & Checklist for Thesis Preparation

| Name of Student:                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Name of Thesis Advisor: |      |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| Task                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         | Date |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Fall Semester   | Develop a <b>preliminary thesis topic</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |      |
|                                 | Develop a thesis idea.<br>Familiarize yourself with institutional guidelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the Graduate School web page information about thesis preparation guidelines.</li> <li>• Review information on the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) website regarding permission to use human subjects.</li> </ul> |                         |      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Spring Semester | Select a Thesis Director (provide him or her with your preliminary prospectus).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         |      |
|                                 | Select a Thesis/Examination Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |      |
|                                 | Finalize the thesis topic and write formal prospectus for approval by committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         |      |
|                                 | Finalize the formal prospectus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         |      |
|                                 | Obtain the Thesis Director's approval of the formal prospectus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         |      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Spring          | Schedule date with Committee Members for a Prospectus Meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                         |      |
|                                 | Send copies of the formal prospectus to the Thesis Committee Members at least 2 weeks before the Prospectus meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |      |
|                                 | Advertise the Prospectus meeting to the Department, using flyers and e-mail.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         |      |
|                                 | <b>Present the prospectus</b> using PowerPoint during a formal meeting with Thesis Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |      |
|                                 | Obtain the <b>Thesis Committee's approval</b> for the research plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |      |
| OR                              | Submit the Research and Compliance form ( <a href="https://www.wcupa.edu/admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx">https://www.wcupa.edu/admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Summer          | If applicable, submit <b>required forms</b> to WCU's IRB/Human Subjects Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |      |
|                                 | If drawing subjects from another site, complete the procedures required by that site's IRB regarding the protection of human subjects. Allow time for processing.                                                                                                                                                                                 |                         |      |
|                                 | If applicable, receive approval from the Human Subjects Committee and from the IRB of another site (if applicable) for data collection. Allow time for processing.                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Summer          | Collect Data.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fall Semester   | Analyze Data.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |      |
|                                 | Write thesis manuscript using the guidelines described in the <i>Publication Manual of the APA, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (2010)</i> and in the style document provided by WCU's Graduate School.                                                                                                                                                    |                         |      |
|                                 | Obtain <b>Thesis Director's approval</b> for the thesis manuscript.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |      |
|                                 | Develop a <b>PowerPoint presentation</b> for use in sharing the results with the Thesis Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |      |
|                                 | Schedule a Thesis Defense meeting with the Thesis Committee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         |      |
|                                 | Advertise the Thesis Defense to the Department, using flyers and e-mail.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         |      |

2<sup>nd</sup> Spring Semester

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Defend the Thesis</b> before the Thesis Committee.</p>                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| <p>Make changes to the manuscript if recommended by the Committee.</p>                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| <p><b>Obtain signatures</b> from Committee Members for the approval of the Thesis (use forms referenced in WCU’s Thesis Guidelines).</p>                                                                                               |  |
| <p>Submit copies of thesis to the Graduate School by the due date (see <a href="https://www.wcupa.edu/admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx">https://www.wcupa.edu/admissions/SCH_DGR/thesis.aspx</a>). Distribute copies to Thesis Comm.</p> |  |
| <p>Receive a grade for thesis credits.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |

## **Appendix D: Student Conduct Policy**

### **Expectations of Conduct in On- and Off-Campus Settings**

Preparation for a successful career in speech-language pathology (SLP) includes the development of sensitivity to patterns of conduct that are appropriate across professional settings (e.g., classroom, clinic, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, etc.). Examples of appropriate behaviors can be found in WCU's *Student Code of Conduct* (see copy on D2L's MA Advisement website under Essential Functions and Code of Conduct), in the **Undergraduate Catalog**, in the **Graduate Catalog**, in the class participation guidelines described in each **course syllabus**, and in the description of expectations provided below:

### **Expectations of Conduct in On-Campus Settings**

#### **Appropriate interaction with academic and clinical faculty**

Students are expected to do their part to promote a professional, effective, respectful, and harmonious relationship with their instructors. Additionally, students are expected to accept constructive feedback (written and/or verbal) from their instructors. When issues arise, students are expected to follow the complaint process described later in this *Handbook*.

#### **Appropriate interactions with faculty, administrators, and support staff at the department, college, university levels**

Students are expected to do their part in establishing and maintaining a professional, effective, respectful, and harmonious relationship with all administrators and support staff at the Departmental, College, and University levels.

#### **Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values**

Students are expected to: dress appropriately to situations and learning environments; conduct themselves professionally through appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication patterns; engage in appropriate personal habits and mannerisms; exhibit fair, consistent, and equitable treatment of all; respect the civil rights and confidentiality of all; demonstrate civility and respect for diversity; see the worth and dignity of others; and work effectively and collaboratively with their peers.

#### **Adherence to class schedules**

Students are expected to be punctual and to observe the schedules, regulations, and expectations of the university-student relationship.

#### **Adherence to attendance and class participation policies**

Students are expected to: adhere to the attendance policies set by their instructors and by the University; fulfill course obligations; notify appropriate persons and/or to submit necessary documentation if absent; follow through on assigned responsibilities; and participate appropriately during class discussion, lectures, and presentations.

## **Demonstrate preparation**

Students are expected to show evidence of being well-prepared for class academically and attitudinally. They are expected to approach tasks in an organized, skillful, and proactive manner and to include appropriate professional content in their assignments.

## **Expectations of Conduct in Off-Campus Affiliation Settings**

### **Appropriate interaction with WCU and affiliation supervisor**

Students are expected to do their part to promote a professional, respectful, effective, and harmonious relationship with their supervisors from WCU and from the affiliation site. They are also expected to accept constructive feedback (written and/or verbal) from their supervisors.

### **Appropriate interaction with other affiliation site staff members and administrators**

Students are expected to do their part to maintain a professional, respectful, and harmonious relationship with other staff members and administrators at their off-campus affiliation sites.

### **Appropriate personal appearance, mannerisms, and values**

Students are expected to dress and groom in a way that is consistent with the affiliation site culture. Many sites require scrubs or lab coats. It is the student's responsibility to obtain these if required. They must conduct themselves professionally by using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication patterns and by demonstrating appropriate personal habits. They must treat others in a manner that is fair, consistent, and equitable. They must respect the civil rights of all, maintain confidentiality of affiliation site matters and client-specific information, demonstrate civility and respect for diversity, see the worth and dignity of all, and work effectively and collaboratively with affiliation site staff and administrators.

### **Adherence to policies**

Students are expected to: adhere to all policies and procedures of the affiliation site; be punctual; and observe established schedules, regulations, and expectations of the university-affiliation site relationship. Many sites have additional policies and procedures, which must be followed by students who are assigned to these sites.

### **Adherence to attendance and responsibility requirements**

Students are expected to demonstrate regular and reliable attendance according to the standards set by the affiliation site. They are expected to: fulfill affiliation site obligations; notify appropriate persons and submit necessary documentation if absent; carry through on all assignments; and exercise sound, ethical, and professional judgment in all matters.



## Adherence to expected levels of preparedness

Students are expected to show evidence of being well prepared, substantively, and attitudinally, for affiliation site responsibilities. They must show a willingness to approach tasks in an organized, skillful, and proactive manner. They are expected to demonstrate enthusiasm for the clients and the affiliation site processes, use their time effectively, and demonstrate the flexibility needed to adapt to changing situations at the affiliation site.

## Consequences of Conduct Violations

Most conduct violations are minor and can be resolved with a friendly reminder of the standards. If there is a need to address a conduct violation formally, due process procedures will be followed to protect the rights of students and faculty. These procedures include four steps consistent with procedures described in the *Student Code of Conduct* of the Ram's Eye View. The process begins with Step 1 and continues until the problem is resolved. Resolution may occur at any step.

**Step 1:** When a faculty member or clinical supervisor observes a conduct violation, they will...

- Inform the student that a conduct violation has been observed.
  - Include an objective description of the violation.
  - Discuss the violation with the student in a supportive manner.
  - Provide an opportunity for the student to share their perspective on the violation.
  - Create a plan to avoid a similar violation (or perception thereof) in the future.
- It is recommended that the faculty/supervisor invite a second faculty member/supervisor to join the conversation.
  - For academic violations, the second faculty member/supervisor may be either the Graduate Coordinator (who also serves as the graduate student advisor) or the Department Chairperson.
  - For Clinic violations, the second faculty member/supervisor must be either the Clinic supervisor, Director of Clinical Services, Graduate Coordinator, or Department Chairperson.
- If a second faculty member/supervisor is invited to the meeting...
  - The student must be informed in advance and must be provided with the opportunity to invite an **advocate**.
  - During the meeting, the second faculty member and the advocate will serve as **passive observers** (refrain from participating in discussion).
  - The overarching goal of the meeting is to turn the apparent conduct disorder into a learning opportunity for the student and faculty member.
  - If the tone of the meeting escalates in a negative manner, the student or the instructor may terminate the meeting and follow up (Step 2).

- At the end of Step 1, the faculty member will send a summary of the contents of the meeting to the student with cc to the student's academic advisor (the Graduate Coordinator). This summary will not be placed in the student's academic file.
- If the Graduate coordinator receives more than one summary of a meeting at Step 1 for the same student, the potential for a pattern of inappropriate conduct will be discussed at the following faculty meeting.

**Step 2:** If the problem is not resolved at Step 1, the student should be referred to the Graduate Coordinator (who also serves as graduate student advisor).

- The possible outcomes of this meeting
  - Dismissal of the complaint
  - A plan for remediation with the student and faculty member
  - A written recommendation for remediation to be placed in the student's department file
  - Follow-up to ensure completion of the remediation plan with the student & faculty member.
  - Document completion of the remediation plan in the student's academic file.
- If the Graduate Coordinator is the faculty member who initiated the complaint, the CSD Chairperson will oversee the Step 2 process.

**Step 3:** If the problem is not resolved with Step 2, then the instructor or the student may bring the issue to the Department Chair.

The possible outcomes of this meeting may include:

- Dismissal of the complaint.
- In cases of extreme ethical violations, such as cheating or plagiarism, a recommendation that the student be dismissed from the program.
- Completion of remediation activity as outlined above in Step 2

**Step 4:** If the student disagrees with the decision of the CSD Chairperson, they may then appeal the decision to the Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences.

The Associate Dean's decision should be considered final unless other provisions are available as per University policy.