COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS — M.S.

Program director
Karen Mainess

The Master of Science degree in communication sciences and disorders offers preparation for careers in the professional practice of speech-language pathology. It provides a basis for graduate study and research at a more advanced level and encourages growth towards independence. The clinical services of the department, Loma Linda University Medical Center, and affiliated practicum sites provide opportunity for supervised clinical experiences that represent the breadth and depth of the profession in a variety of settings.

Upon completion of the Master of Science degree, graduates are eligible to:

- receive the preliminary speech-language pathology services credential (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing);
- receive the temporary license in speech-language pathology (California Department of Consumer Affairs); and
- seek employment as clinical fellows, working towards the certificate of clinical competence (through the Council for Clinical Certification of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association).

Two tracks lead to the Master of Science degree:

- Individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology or in communicative disorders may apply for admission to the two-year master's degree program. Postbaccalaureate foundational course work completed at an institution other than Loma Linda University by applicants who have a bachelor's degree in a field other than speech-language pathology or communication disorders is considered on an individual basis. In general, foundational course work completed at California state schools where undergraduate courses in communication sciences and disorders are required is acknowledged. Prior to admission or within the first quarter of study (see Program of Study below), CBEST scores are required.
- Individuals who have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with a major in a field other than speech-language pathology or communication disorders and who meet minimum requirements may apply for admission to the transitional three-year Master of Science degree curriculum.

The program

The curriculum consists of completing required graduate-level courses, supervised clinical practice, capstone research, and clinical presentations. The traditional Master of Science degree curriculum is two years in length. Full-time students will complete the curriculum in seven quarters, including the summer between the first and the second years. Students begin the curriculum in the Autumn Quarter and go through the program as a cohort. Classes are scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening, and on one Friday per month. During the Winter Quarter and Spring Quarter of the second year, students take the full-time public school and medical fieldwork. *Note: Students may be required to go out of state for their full-time fieldwork and, therefore, should be prepared financially.

Students enrolled in the three-year transitional master's degree curriculum will begin their program in the Autumn Quarter and go through as a cohort. During the first year, students complete course work that provides the necessary foundation for the second- and third-year disorders courses and clinical practice. In the summer following the first year, all students may be required to take the clinical practicum. Beginning with the second year, the transitional master's degree students join the cohort of new students in the two-year master's degree program; the two groups complete the remaining two years simultaneously.

University student learning outcomes

Students who graduate with a Master of Science degree in communication sciences and disorders will meet the University outcomes (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/institutional-learning-outcomes).

Program learning outcomes

Students will also meet the following program-specific outcomes:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of human communication disorders and differences and swallowing disorders.
2. Demonstrate skill in assessment and intervention for human communication disorders and differences and swallowing disorders.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the role of the school-based speech-language pathologist.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of processes used in discipline-related research.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of counseling principles and practices applied to the practice of speech-language pathology with diverse populations and across the lifespan.

California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST)

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires that all students pursuing a credential pass the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST). The CBEST must be passed before beginning the graduate curriculum, or within the first quarter. The CBEST is a measure of reading, writing, and mathematics proficiency; and is required by law for anyone applying for a credential in the public schools of California and Oregon. This test is given by National Evaluation Systems, Inc., Box 340880, Sacramento, CA 95834-0880, 916/928-4001. Additional information may be found at <http://www.cbest.ets.org/>.

Praxis examination

The Praxis (administered by a national testing service) is a multiple choice examination designed to evaluate students' broad-based knowledge across the disorders and is required for ASHA certification, for the California license, and for the California school credential. It is a nationally standardized and publicly administered test. A passing score of 600 must be achieved, and the test may be taken multiple times. Information about the Praxis may be obtained by going to <http://www.ets.org/praxis>. Students in the Master of Science degree curriculum in communication sciences and disorders are required to take the Praxis at the end of their first year. The department provides a preparation workbook, which all students are required to review prior to taking the examination.
Remediation

Alumni and graduate students who do not achieve a passing score on the Praxis may take any course and/or seminar offered by the department free of charge in order to refresh knowledge or remediate areas of concern.

Graduate students who demonstrate unsatisfactory performance in the clinical courses CMSD 567 Clinical Practice in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, Advanced, CMSD 586 Educational Fieldwork I, CMSD 588 Educational Fieldwork II, CMSD 596 Medical Fieldwork I, or CMSD 597 Medical Fieldwork II will be required to repeat the clinical experience and to register for CMSD 589 Remediation/Advanced Directed Teaching and/or CMSD 599 Remediation/Externship, respectively.

Student progress review

Each student's progress in the Master of Science degree curriculum in communication sciences and disorders is reviewed quarterly. Written feedback is provided, along with recommendations for remediation, if needed. In addition, each cohort meets with the graduate advisor: as a group, twice yearly; individually, at least once a year; and on an as-needed basis.

Accreditation

The Master of Science degree curriculum in communication sciences and disorders is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

Any concerns about the program's compliance with accreditation standards may be submitted to: The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA), 2200 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850; telephone: 301/897-5700 or 800/498-2071; TTY: 301/571-0481.

The curriculum is also accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and is approved by the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispenser's Board (SLPAHADB).

Admissions

In addition to Loma Linda University and School of Allied Health Professions admissions requirements, the applicant must also complete the following requirements:

Acceptable undergraduate preparation includes a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology or in communicative disorders. Postbaccalaureate foundational course work completed at an institution other than Loma Linda University by applicants who have a bachelor's degree in a field other than speech-language pathology or communication disorders is considered on an individual basis. In general, foundational course work completed at California state schools where undergraduate courses in communication sciences and disorders are required is acknowledged. Prior to admission or within the first quarter of study (see Program of Study below), CBEST scores are required.

The admissions committee considers the following qualifications in making admission decisions: personal statement, overall G.P.A., G.P.A. for last 96 quarter units, professional potential, personal interview, on-site writing sample, and letters of recommendation.

Regular admission may be granted to applicants who (1) submit a literate personal statement that addresses professional motivation and reasons for selecting Loma Linda University; (2) complete a writing sample that demonstrates appropriate grammar, style, and critical thinking; (3) submit three letters of recommendation (preferably academic); (4) demonstrate professional potential and present well during the interview; (5) have no undergraduate deficiencies; and (6) meet the scholarship requirements for admission—minimum cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 with a minimum G.P.A. of 3.3 for the last 96 quarter units or 64 semester units (last two undergraduate years). *Note: The required minimum G.P.A. for consideration is not a guarantee of admission.

Alternate status may be granted to qualified applicants who are not accepted in the first round of selection.

Denial of admission indicates that the applicant did not meet one or more of the admission requirements, that the application was incomplete, or that the application deadline was not met.

Application deadlines

Online applications open October 1. Applications close January 1 for the two-year master's and on March 1 for the three-year transitional master's.

Applications and all supporting information (transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.) must be submitted by January 1 to be included in the first round of selection for the two-year master's program and March 1 for the three-year transitional master's program.

Programs

- Communication Sciences - M.S. (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/communication-sciences-ms/ms)
- Communication Sciences - M.S. (Transitional) (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/communication-sciences-ms/ms-transitional)
- Communication Sciences - Comparison (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/communication-sciences-ms/comparison)