

COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS – M.S.

Program director

Lamitra Baez

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).
- 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 communication disorders may apply for admission to the two-year master's degree program. Postbaccalaureate foundational coursework 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 coursework completed at California state schools where undergraduate courses in communication sciences and disorders are required is acknowledged.
- 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 educational fieldwork or adult placement 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 coursework 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

By the end of their program, students should be able to:

1. Synthesize information regarding characteristics and etiologies of communication disorders and differences as well as swallowing disorders in children and adults.
2. Integrate skills in assessment of human communication disorders and differences as well as swallowing disorders with a variety of clinical populations.
3. Plan and implement intervention programs for a variety of clinical populations across the age span.
4. Critically apply research design, statistical analyses, and interpretation of literature related to evidence-based practice and specific research topics.
5. Incorporate cultural responsiveness to diversity (e.g., linguistic, neurological, economic, age, sexual, gender, ability, and racial) within academic and/or professional environments.
6. Implement counseling principles and practices related to the discipline of speech-language pathology across the lifespan.
7. Identify, discuss, and apply service-learning principles (e.g., cooperation, critical reflection, and discipline-specific application) through engaged partnership with the community.
8. Incorporate basic components of professional ethics in academic scenarios regarding treating, counseling, advocating for, and documenting care for clients.

Praxis examination

The Praxis, a national standardized and publicly administered test (taken at a national testing service), is a multiple choice examination designed to evaluate a student's broad-based knowledge across the disorders. It is required for ASHA certification, for the California license, and for the California school credential. A passing score of 162 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> (<http://www.ets.org/praxis/>). Students in the Master of Science degree curriculum in communication sciences and disorders are not required to take the Praxis while in the graduate program. However, taking the Praxis before graduation is recommended.

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 Fieldwork II will be required to repeat the clinical experience and/or may be required to register for CMSD 589 and/or CMSD 599, respectively.

Student progress review

Each student's progress 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 a year, and on an as-needed basis.

Accreditation

The Master of Science degree program in speech-language pathology at Loma Linda University is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 220 Research Boulevard, #310, Rockville, MD 20850, 800/498-2071 or 301/296-5700; website: <http://www.asha.org>.

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 (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/admission-policies-information/#admissionrequirementstext>) and School of Allied Health Professions (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/#generalregulationstext>) 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. Post-baccalaureate foundational coursework 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 coursework 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) 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/>), M.S. (Transitional) (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/communication-sciences-ms/ms-transitional/>), Comparison (<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/allied-health-professions/communication-sciences-ms/comparison/>)