

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) are licensed professionals who work to assess, diagnose, treat and help prevent speech, voice, language, cognitive-linguistic and swallowing disorders across the age span.

The Master of Science (MS) in Speech-Language Pathology (<https://www.uthscsa.edu/academics/health-professions/programs/speech-language-pathology-ms/>) education program at The University of Texas at San Antonio provides a two-year (5 semesters) full-time residential graduate study with a unique curriculum grounded on the integration of academic coursework and community-based clinical experience. The program is housed in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department (CSD) within the School of Health Professions with a medical focus. The curriculum is mainly designed and sequenced to provide students with scientific and clinical education to work in various healthcare and school settings.

The master's program in SLP (MS-SLP) is unique in its curricular specification and application of knowledge within a community-based clinical education framework. Training in a health science campus with constant exposure to multidisciplinary training and direct access to the medical community provides students with vigorous preparation in serving adults and children with medical and educational needs. The program will prepare graduates to compete successfully for entry-level positions in speech-language pathology, particularly in healthcare settings. Graduates will be well equipped to work in complex clinical settings such as acute or rehabilitation hospitals for adult patients or facilities where children with medical challenges need to integrate back into school settings.

The Master of Science (MS) education program in Speech-language Pathology (residential) at The University of Texas at San Antonio is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2200 Research Boulevard, #310, Rockville, MD 20850, 800-498-2071 or 301-296-5700.

The CAA website provides greater detail regarding accreditation requirements and what accreditation means to students and the public. Anyone interested in learning more about this professional accreditation status or wishing to file a complaint regarding the program's compliance with accreditation standards can use the information available at <https://caa.asha.org/?s=complaint>

## Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for the MS-SLP degree program align with the general requirements of The University of Texas at San Antonio for graduate education. All required application information, including official transcripts from all institutions attended, is submitted through a centralized web-based application system. All applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered eligible candidates:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution in the United States
- Required pre-requisite coursework of basic human communication include:

- Introduction to audiology
- Phonetics and normal articulation
- Normal language development
- Anatomy and physiology of speech and hearing
- Speech and hearing science
- Completing prerequisite coursework in basic science includes at least one course each in behavioral/social sciences, biological sciences, physical sciences (physics or chemistry), and statistics. While working on graduate coursework, students can co-enroll in up to two basic science courses except for statistics. Students must complete all basic science prerequisites no later than the end of their fourth semester in the MS-SLP program.
- Minimal grade point average (GPA): An overall GPA of 3.0
- Three letters of recommendation are required attesting to the applicant's readiness for graduate-level studies.
- A grade of C or better in the individual pre-requisite courses.

## Application Process

Applicants must submit online applications through the Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service (CSDCAS) provided by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. CSDCAS is a state-of-the-art, web-based application system that offers applicants an effective way to apply to any number of participating programs in speech-language pathology by completing a single application. It provides a streamlined and user-friendly application process following a standardized procedure that incorporates convenient web-based submission of official transcripts and recommendations. The CSDCAS operational cycle is from September of year 1–April of year 2 (e.g., September 2024-April 2025). The application deadline (<https://uthscsa.edu/health-professions/programs/speech-language-pathology-ms/admissions/>) can be found on the program admission webpage.

## Degree Requirements

The MS-SLP program curriculum consists of 66 semester credit hours spanning two years (5 consecutive semesters) of study and must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher to be eligible to graduate. Students must also complete a minimum of 400 supervised clinical hours obtained from clinically diverse settings to qualify for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Certificate of Clinical Competence (ASHA-CCC).

## Sample Plan of Study

The program's Student Progress Committee will ensure that MS-SLP students follow the following schedule to make appropriate progress toward their degree. The Student Progress Committee will only grant exceptions from this schedule under extenuating circumstances.

All students in the MS-SLP program must complete the following course of study:

### First Year

#### Fall

|           |   | Credit Hours |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| MSLP 5000 | Neurological Bases of Speech, Hearing and Language                    | 3            |
| MSLP 5003 | Audiological Service Delivery in Speech-Language Pathology Laboratory | 1            |
| MSLP 5004 | Research Methods  | 3            |

|                            |  |             |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|
| MSLP 5005                  | Clinical Methods in Speech-Language Pathology 1            | 2           |
| MSLP 5007                  | Motor Speech Disorders                                     | 3           |
| MSLP 5008                  | Language Disorders in Children: Preschool and School Age   | 3           |
| <b>Spring</b>              |  |             |
| MSLP 5002                  | Speech Sound Disorders                                     | 3           |
| MSLP 5006                  | Aphasia and Related Disorders                              | 3           |
| MSLP 5009                  | Dysphagia in Adults and Children                           | 3           |
| MSLP 5010                  | Clinical Methods in Speech-Language Pathology 2            | 2           |
| MSLP 5012                  | Cognition and Communicative Disorders                      | 3           |
| MSLP 6001                  | Cultural and Linguistic Diversity                          | 3           |
| <b>Summer</b>              |  |             |
| MSLP 5001                  | Social Communication Disorders                             | 3           |
| MSLP 5013                  | Voice and Resonance Disorders                              | 3           |
| MSLP 5015                  | Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 1                      | 4           |
| MSLP 6003                  | Applied Topics in Communication Disorders and Sciences     | 2           |
| <b>Second Year</b>         |  |             |
| <b>Fall</b>                |  |             |
| MSLP 5011                  | Evidence-Based Practice, Professional Issues, and Ethics   | 2           |
| MSLP 5014                  | Fluency Disorders: Theory and Practice                     | 3           |
| MSLP 6000                  | Augmentative and Alternative Communication                 | 2           |
| MSLP 6002                  | Head Neck Cancer, Tracheostomy, and Mechanical Ventilation | 3           |
| MSLP 6004                  | Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 2                      | 4           |
| <b>Spring</b>              |  |             |
| MSLP 6005                  | Speech-Language Pathology Advanced Practicum               | 8           |
| <b>Total Credit Hours:</b> |  | <b>66.0</b> |

## Objectives/Program Outcomes

The MS-SLP curriculum is designed to achieve three main objectives: 1) to educate and train a diverse student body to become critical thinkers and research-driven clinicians in the best practices; 2) to prepare students for future leadership roles through faculty-guided clinical practica and community outreach activities; and 3) to foster opportunities for student scholarships and prepare the graduates to be competitive candidates for advanced training programs (e.g., Ph.D.) to help address the national faculty shortage dilemma.

For continuing program improvement, program outcomes are evaluated based on several benchmarks. First, the program regularly tracks the passing rates of the national Praxis examination. The Praxis examination in speech-language pathology assesses the beginning practitioners' understanding of essential content and current practices. Passing the test is required for state credentialing and ASHA certification. Second, the program collects and analyzes data on educational pursuits (e.g., Ph.D.), career opportunities (employment rates) and the type of employment (e.g., medical settings, schools, etc.). Third, the program elicits feedback from various sources to assess students' learning experience and readiness for employment. The outcome data collected may include, but are not limited, to exit surveys of graduating students, online surveys of past alumni, input from the community advisory board, interviews of students' clinical supervisors in the community, and

communication with graduates' employers. Regular contact with the Director of Academic Assessment & Special Projects in the School of Health Professions allows for the additional data collection on student learning outcomes and program satisfaction.

## Program Policies

### Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The ethical code establishes professional expectations for our scientific and clinical practice based on the principles of duty, accountability, fairness and responsibility. It is intended to ensure the consumer's welfare and protect the reputation and integrity of the profession. Speech-language pathologists are expected to abide by the profession's code of ethics and standard of practice (ASHA Code of Ethics, 2016; ASHA Preferred Practice Patterns for the Profession of Speech-Language Pathology, 2004). The MS-SLP program adheres to this ethical code and standards of practice and expects students' behaviors to be consistent with these principles.

### Clinical Practicum

Clinical practicum is an integral part of the educational process for becoming a speech-language pathologist. Students will develop clinical skills through observation and experiential learning during clinical practicum rotations and apply their understanding of theory and techniques through extended supervised experience.

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) requires students to complete a minimum of 400 supervised clinical practicum hours, including 25 in guided observation and 325 to be attained at the graduate level. Students are expected to have sufficient breadth and depth of opportunities to obtain clinical experiences in different work settings with diverse populations to acquire adequate skills to enter professional practice.

Students can complete clinical practicum only at assigned facilities. Clinical practicum rotations may occur outside the UT Health San

Antonio campus at affiliated clinical institutions/sites; most external practicum sites are in Texas. The CSD Department maintains contractual agreements with approved clinical sites carefully selected to assure compatibility with the department's philosophy, objectives and curriculum design. The Clinical Education Director maintains contact with the external clinical practicum sites and communicates with onsite supervisors to provide the rubrics to assess students' clinical competence. In general, evaluation is based on the student's performance, judgment and professionalism as measured by the onsite supervisor using the given rubrics.

Although students are given opportunities to express their preferences for the location of external placements, the CSD Department cannot grant assurances that students will be placed based on their choices. Students may be assigned practicum placements to ensure degree completion based on availability or other factors. Placements are usually secured many months in advance of a scheduled practicum experience.

Students are expected to comply with policies and procedures pertaining to respective clinical facilities—such as onboarding processes requiring a background check and drug screen—and submit all required assignments, evaluations, and other documentation in a timely fashion.

### Program Costs

In addition to required tuition and fees, there are costs for textbooks and supplies. Students may also incur travel expenses during external clinical practicum. In some cases, the full-time clinical internship in the

last semester may require students to reside outside of San Antonio for the entire duration of the practicum. Practicum expenses are the student's responsibility and will vary depending on the costs for travel and, when necessary, temporary housing and maintenance of local accommodations.

## Other Program Requirements

To be eligible for graduation, students must meet all academic degree requirements and complete the interprofessional education activities required by the school.

## Courses

### **MSLP 5000. Neurological Bases of Speech, Hearing and Language. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course presents neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and the structure and function of the central and peripheral nervous system that form the neurologic foundation for speech, hearing, and language processes.

### **MSLP 5001. Social Communication Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses theoretical models, current research, and their application to normal development and social communication deficits. It focuses on functional assessments and intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and/or other social communication deficits.

### **MSLP 5002. Speech Sound Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses the development and disorders of articulation and phonology in pediatric populations. Theories, current assessment batteries, and procedures of contemporary interventions are discussed.

### **MSLP 5003. Audiological Service Delivery in Speech-Language Pathology Laboratory. 1 Credit Hour.**

This course reviews the basics of hearing science and aural rehabilitation. Content areas include types of hearing loss, forms of hearing assessment, and principles of intervention and rehabilitation. Skills related to participating in hearing screening and evaluation and rehabilitative strategies for practicing speech-language pathologists are addressed.

### **MSLP 5004. Research Methods. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses the skills needed to understand and critique research reports. It discusses the principles and criteria for evaluating published research, including statistical analyses, validity issues, and evidence-based practice.

### **MSLP 5005. Clinical Methods in Speech-Language Pathology 1. 2 Credit Hours.**

This is the first of the two courses taught in the simulated student clinical setting. This course focuses on basic clinical methods and skills for beginning graduate students in speech-language pathology with an emphasis on assessment. Students will practice administering, scoring, and interpreting standardized tests. Clinical note-writing and documentation are modeled and discussed.

### **MSLP 5006. Aphasia and Related Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course examines adult-onset aphasia and related language disorders. The content areas include theoretical foundations, pathophysiology, symptomatology, assessment and differential diagnosis, and clinical management.

### **MSLP 5007. Motor Speech Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses motor speech disorders- apraxia of Speech and dysarthria. The content areas include theoretical models, neuropathophysiology, symptomatology, various instruments and tests for assessment, differential diagnosis, and clinical management.

### **MSLP 5008. Language Disorders in Children: Preschool and School Age.**

#### **3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses language development and disorders in preschool, school-age, and adolescent children and adolescents. The content areas include underlying etiologies, clinical characteristics, assessment batteries, and evidence-based intervention strategies for primary and secondary language learners.

### **MSLP 5009. Dysphagia in Adults and Children. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses swallowing disorders in both adults and children in various populations across the age span. Content areas covered include normal anatomy and physiology of swallowing, evaluation of disordered oropharyngeal swallowing using instrumental and non-instrumental examination tools, including videofluoroscopic swallow study (VFSS) and flexible endoscopic examination for swallowing (FEES) procedures, and evidence-based treatment strategies for swallowing disorders.

### **MSLP 5010. Clinical Methods in Speech-Language Pathology 2. 2 Credit Hours.**

This is the second of the two courses taught in the simulated clinical setting. It focuses on advanced clinical methods and skills for beginning graduate students with an emphasis on intervention. Topics covered include various published and evidence-based clinical protocols and operational procedures in management.

### **MSLP 5011. Evidence-Based Practice, Professional Issues, and Ethics. 2 Credit Hours.**

This course provides an overview of professional issues for speech-language pathologists. Content areas include principles of evidence-based practice, regulatory, licensure and scope of practice issues, professional ethics, health care reimbursement, risk management, and other current professional and legal matters related to practicing speech-language pathologists.

### **MSLP 5012. Cognition and Communicative Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course examines normal cognition and the impacts of aging, dementia, and traumatic brain injury on cognitive communication. It addresses the assessment and management of communication disorders arising from these conditions.

### **MSLP 5013. Voice and Resonance Disorders. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course examines the acoustic, perceptual, and physiological parameters in normal and abnormal voice production and resonance. It addresses the differential diagnosis and management of hyperfunctional, psychogenic, and organic voice disorders. For resonance disorders, the course addresses embryology, anatomy, and physiology of normal and abnormal development of orofacial structures, cleft-palate and craniofacial anomalies in various syndromes, and their effects on speech, hearing, and language function.

### **MSLP 5014. Fluency Disorders: Theory and Practice. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses childhood-onset and adult-onset fluency disorders. Content areas include the identification of typical and atypical dysfluency in children, the determination of various linguistic, developmental, physiological, and psychological aspects associated with developmental stuttering, and differential diagnosis of adult-onset neurogenic and psychogenic stuttering. Anatomical and functional changes in neuroimaging studies associated with fluent and stuttered speech are reviewed, and evidence-based treatment approaches are discussed.

**MSLP 5015. Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 1. 4 Credit Hours.**

This clinical practicum is designed to help beginning student clinicians meet the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) required number of clinical hours in different practicum settings. The clinic coordinator is responsible for procuring appropriate placements to best match students needs with clinical practicum sites. Practicum settings may include hospitals, medical centers/clinics, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, public and private schools, special needs schools, charter schools, and private practices. Prerequisites: MSLP 5005 and MSLP 5010.

**MSLP 5101. Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech and Hearing. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course provides essential background on structural and functional components of the communicative act and swallowing mechanism, including respiration, phonation, resonance, articulation, neural processes, and deglutition.

**MSLP 5102. Phonetics and Normal Articulation. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course offers an essential background in articulatory phonetics, descriptive phonetics, clinical phonetics, and developmental phonology. Specific materials may cover the basic articulatory process, acoustic characteristics, phonetic principles, pronunciation rules, segmental and suprasegmental features, the use of diacritics and IPA, and in-class practice of phonetic transcription.

**MSLP 5103. Normal Language Development. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course offers a basic introduction to language development from birth through adolescence, principles of language acquisition, and language differences related to cultural diversity. Corequisites: MSLP 5102.

**MSLP 5104. Speech and Hearing Science. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course introduces fundamental processes underlying the acoustic and physiological aspects of speech production and perception and the principles and methods of quantifying various speech disorders. Corequisites: MSLP 5102.

**MSLP 5105. Introduction to Audiology. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course introduces the anatomy and physiology of hearing and balance systems, auditory and balance disorders, and hearing evaluation for adults and children. Corequisites: MSLP 5102, MSLP 5104.

**MSLP 6000. Augmentative and Alternative Communication. 2 Credit Hours.**

This course introduces current methods and basic strategies associated with augmentative and alternative communication aids and approaches in patients with varying types of communicative disorders. The course addresses the knowledge and skills required to assess and identify potential AAC users, decision-making, and instructional development and implementation.

**MSLP 6001. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course addresses the cultural and linguistic diversity relevant to clinical practice in the profession of speech-language pathology. Students acquire a knowledge base regarding the interaction of culture, dialects, and multilingualism with communication disorders and apply it to clinical situations.

**MSLP 6002. Head Neck Cancer, Tracheostomy, and Mechanical Ventilation. 3 Credit Hours.**

This is a two-part course. Part I covers the assessment and management of speech, voice, and swallowing disorders resulting from head and neck cancer. The voice and speech changes resulting from head and neck surgeries and treatment strategies are discussed. Part II covers the unique challenges of evaluation and treatment of speech and voice impairments related to tracheostomy tube placement and/or ventilator support. A basic understanding of various tracheostomy tubes, one-way speaking valves, and ventilators/ventilator settings is reviewed, and short- and long-term options for communication are discussed.

**MSLP 6003. Applied Topics in Communication Disorders and Sciences. 2 Credit Hours.**

In this course, special topics related to scientific, clinical, and professional issues in speech-language pathology are examined using a variety of formats, including guest speakers in student development sessions, clinical rounds, and journal clubs. The development of oral presentation skills and analytical and clinical problem-solving skills are emphasized.

**MSLP 6004. Speech-Language Pathology Practicum 2. 4 Credit Hours.**

This clinical practicum is designed to help graduate student clinicians meet the required number of clinical hours required by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in different practicum settings. The clinic coordinator is responsible for procuring appropriate placements to match the needs of students and clinical practicum sites. Practicum settings may include hospitals, medical centers/clinics, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, public and private schools, special needs schools, charter schools, and private practices. Prerequisites: MSLP 5015.

**MSLP 6005. Speech-Language Pathology Advanced Practicum. 8 Credit Hours.**

This is a full-time externship designed to help students meet the required number of clinical hours required by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in different practicum settings. The clinic coordinator is responsible for procuring appropriate placements to match the needs of students and clinical practicum sites. Practicum settings may include hospitals, medical centers/clinics, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, public and private schools, special needs schools, charter schools, and private practices. Prerequisites: MSLP 5015 and MSLP 6004.

**MSLP 7091. Advanced Topics in Communication Sciences and Disorders. 1-9 Credit Hours.**

This course is an independent study of topics of current interest in the rehabilitation sciences. Includes study of current research and important new developments in specific areas of practice and research. Can be repeated for up to 9 credit hours.