

# SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY, MASTER OF SCIENCE - SPPA

## Program Description

The Speech Language Pathology program prepares graduate students to make a difference in the world on a very personal level—they improve the lives of individuals - one person, one family - at a time. The program develops leadership in individuals, who are educated in the liberal arts, and who use their talents to help support individuals with communication or swallowing disorders. Our students realize their social responsibility first-hand by providing services to those in need. They think critically and creatively while responding with humanity. The Speech Language Pathology program fosters the development of lifelong learners who are adaptive and reflective clinicians, culturally sensitive, and empathetic to those in need.

The M.S. degree in speech language pathology is a full-time residential program. The program requires 6 semesters of full-time study to complete. All students must begin the program in a fall semester.

## Application Pathways

The Department of Speech Language Pathology believes in supporting students at all levels of entry into the profession. There are three pathways for entrance to the program.

The first pathway, the Standard Application Pathway, allows applicants to apply directly to the graduate program regardless of whether they have completed any prior coursework at Saint Mary's College. This pathway is appropriate for applicants who have completed the prerequisite coursework either at Saint Mary's College or another university and are not eligible for one of the other application pathways.

The 4+1 B.A. + M.S. Pathway is a combined five-year program during which students earn both the B.A. and M.S. degrees. This pathway is appropriate for students who have the time and dedication to pursue an accelerated program and know early on in their undergraduate program that they wish to become a speech-language pathologist. As described below, only Saint Mary's College undergraduate students are eligible for this pathway.

The Bridge to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology Pathway is appropriate for students who do not have an undergraduate background in speech-language pathology. Students interested in this pathway first enroll at Saint Mary's in the undergraduate prerequisite coursework needed for future graduate study. Students who meet the eligibility guidelines during the Bridge Program can then continue their graduate education at Saint Mary's College.

## Application Requirements for the Graduate Program in Speech Language Pathology via the Standard Application Pathway

Any applicant can apply to the graduate program using the standard application process. All application materials and application fee must be submitted via CSDCAS (<https://csdcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>) no later than January 15 for admission to the following fall semester. The requirements to be considered for admission to the

graduate program in speech language pathology for those students applying via the standard pathway are:

- Submission of a **completed CSDCAS application and application fee**. No supplemental application or additional application fee is required.
- **Official transcripts** from every college or university attended.
- All applicants must have earned a **bachelor's degree** from a regionally accredited college or university prior to beginning the graduate program. Although there is no minimum GPA requirement, competitive applicants typically have earned at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA.
- A **personal essay** addressing your reasons for pursuing an advanced degree in speech language pathology, your professional objectives, and how Saint Mary's aligns with your person and professional goals.
- The experiences, guided clinical experiences, achievements, and conferences attended sections of the **Supporting Information section of the CSDCAS application**. This information is in lieu of submitting a resume.
- **Three recommendation letters**. If you are a current student or recent graduate, we strongly suggest that at least two of your references be from faculty. All references should be professional in nature such as from faculty, supervisors from paid or volunteer positions, or other professional contacts. Personal references from relatives or friends are generally not helpful in the admission process.
- Completion of the **prerequisite coursework** described below. It is most common for applicants to have completed one three-credit semester course in each area; however, it is also possible for a given content area to be covered by a combination of multiple courses. In some cases, a review of syllabi might be requested. A grade of C or higher is required for coursework to meet the prerequisite requirement. Each course must be completed before you begin the graduate program.
  - **Anatomy & Physiology of Speech and Hearing**: Content focused on anatomy and physiology related to respiration, phonation, articulation, the nervous system, and hearing. General anatomy and physiology courses usually do not meet this requirement.
  - **Phonetics**: Content focused on phonetic transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet and articulatory characteristics of sounds. Typically, this content is met by a 3-credit semester long course entirely focused on phonetics.
  - **Child Language Development**: Content focused on language development in children who have typical communication skills.
  - **Speech & Hearing Sciences**: Content focused on hearing science and the science of speech production. Courses in this area are often called Acoustics or Speech & Hearing Sciences. Some undergraduate programs offer one course on Speech Science and a separate course on Hearing Science; in those cases, please list both courses in your CSDCAS application.
  - **Introduction to Audiology**: Content focused on hearing disorders and the assessment of hearing.
  - **Aural Re/habilitation**: Content focused on the habilitation or rehabilitation of hearing disorders.
  - **Biological Sciences**: A course related to the study and characterization of living organisms and the investigation of the science behind living things. Most biology courses meet this requirement. Coursework in CSD does not meet this requirement. This course must meet the ASHA CFCC SLP Standards for Certification (<https://www.asha.org/certification/course-content-areas-for-slp-standards/>).

- **Physical Sciences:** A course in chemistry or physics. Coursework in CSD does not meet this requirement. This course must meet the ASHA CFCC SLP Standards for Certification (<https://www.asha.org/certification/course-content-areas-for-slp-standards/>).
- **Statistics:** A stand-alone course in statistics. Coursework focused on entirely or predominantly on research methods does not meet this requirement. This course must meet the ASHA CFCC SLP Standards for Certification (<https://www.asha.org/certification/course-content-areas-for-slp-standards/>).
- **Social Sciences & Behavioral Sciences:** A course related to the systematic analysis and investigation of human and/or animal behavior through observation and/or experimentation. A range of courses may meet this requirement including but not limited to coursework in psychology, anthropology, ethnic/cultural studies. This course must meet the ASHA CFCC SLP Standards for Certification (<https://www.asha.org/certification/course-content-areas-for-slp-standards/>).

Applicants who attended foreign and French-Canadian schools must also follow the CSDCAS guidelines for submitting documentation for foreign transcript evaluation/s. Applicants who earned an undergraduate degree from a university where English was not the primary language of instruction must also follow CSDCAS guidelines for submitting official TOEFL or IELTS scores.

## Entrance Requirements for the Graduate Program in Speech Language Pathology via the 4+1 B.A. + M.S. Pathway

Current Saint Mary's undergraduate students who have declared a major in the 4+1 combined B.A. and M.S. degree program in speech language pathology are eligible for automatic acceptance to the graduate program if they have met all of the following requirements:

- At least junior standing at the application due date
- A minimum overall cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 at the application due date
- Completed the following prerequisite courses or be enrolled in at the application due date: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, SLP 330, SLP 340, SLP 412, and SLP 420.
- Earned at least a GPA of 3.25 in the foundation SLP courses: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, and SLP 330 at Saint Mary's College.
- Completed the following required supporting courses at the application due date:
  - Natural Science (NSN/NSL): Students must take one Biology course
    - Biology: BIO 109/L (Marine Biology), BIO 110L (Understanding Women's Cancers), BIO 112 (Evolution for Everyone), BIO 120 (Human Genetics)
  - Natural Science (NSN/NSL): Students must take one course in either physics or chemistry
    - Chemistry: CHEM 101/L (Mystery, Mayhem, and Murder), CHEM 102 (Chemistry for the Citizen) OR
    - Physics: PHYS 102 (Introductory Topics in Physics: Energy), PHYS 111L (College Physics I: Mechanics and Waves)
  - Lifespan Developmental
    - PSYC 201L/401 (Child Development/Psychology of Adult Development and Aging) OR
    - PSYC 305 (Lifespan Developmental Psychology)

- Met the essential functions required to practice as a speech language pathologist
- Successfully completed a criminal background check, fingerprint check, and drug screen before entering the Speech Pathology BA-MS program.

Currently enrolled undergraduate students at Saint Mary's College who choose this path for entrance to the M.S. in Speech Language Pathology program must declare their intent to begin the graduate program by completing the *Intent to Enroll: 4+1 B.A. to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology* form. This form must be submitted no later than January 15 during the second semester of the student's junior year for admission for the upcoming fall semester. Students who have not yet met all of the admission requirements for the 4+1 B.A. to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology admissions path but who are on track to meet all requirements prior to the start of the graduate program are eligible to submit the Intent to Enroll form. If a student does not yet meet all requirements, admission to the program will be pending satisfactory completion of all remaining requirements.

Students who do not submit the *Intent to Enroll: 4+1 B.A. to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology* form by the January 15 deadline but who meet all other requirements may be considered for entrance to the graduate program on a space available basis only. Submission of the *Intent to Enroll* form is in lieu of the full application process; only currently enrolled undergraduate students whose declared major is the B.A. + M.S. 4+1 program at Saint Mary's are eligible for this pathway.

## Entrance Requirements for the Graduate Program in Speech Language Pathology via the SLP Bridge Program Pathway

Current Saint Mary's students enrolled in the Speech Language Pathology Bridge program are eligible for automatic acceptance to the graduate program if they have met all of the following requirements:

- Completed the following prerequisite courses: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, SLP 330, SLP 334, SLP 340, SLP 350, SLP 412, SLP 420, and SLP 450.
- Completed the following prerequisite courses / equivalent requirements that meet CAA standards:
  - A course in biological science
  - A course in physical science
  - A course in introductory psychology
  - A course or courses in developmental psychology across the lifespan
  - A course in statistics
- Earned at least a GPA of 3.25 in the following SLP foundation courses: SLP 220, SLP 230, SLP 240, SLP 310, and SLP 330.
- A minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
- Meet the essential functions required to practice as a speech language pathologist.
- Successfully completed a criminal background check, fingerprint check, and drug screen before entering the M.S. SLP program.

Currently enrolled Bridge students at Saint Mary's College who choose this path for entrance to the M.S. in Speech Language Pathology program declare their intent to enroll in the graduate program by completing the *Intent to Enroll: Bridge Program to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology* form. This form must be submitted after the student has completed at least one semester in the Bridge program but no later than January 15 for admission for the upcoming fall semester. Students who have not yet

met all of the admission requirements for the Bridge Program to M.S. in Speech Language Pathology pathway but who are on track to meet all requirements prior to the start of the graduate program are eligible to submit the *Intent to Enroll* form. If a student does not yet meet all requirements, admission to the program will be pending satisfactory completion of all remaining requirements.

Submission of the *Intent to Enroll* form is in lieu of the full application process; only currently enrolled Bridge students at Saint Mary's are eligible for this admissions pathway.

## Praxis Examination

All students are required to report official Praxis scores to the College. Students should list Saint Mary's College as both a report recipient and an attending institution using code 0970.

## Eligibility for Clinical Placement

Graduate students earning a failing grade (below a B-) in a clinical application academic class (e.g., SLP 516 Motor Speech Disorders, SLP 524 Autism Spectrum Disorders, SLP 522 Dysphagia, etc.) will not be eligible for a clinical placement in the area until he/she satisfactorily completes that academic class. This may result in an extension of the program.

## Governmental Requirements for Some Professions

Some professions (e.g. nursing, teaching, social work, speech therapy, accounting, etc.) require specific requirements for licensure and/or hiring (e.g. acceptable criminal background check, sex offender check, drug and alcohol testing, citizenship or permanent resident status documentation, valid immigration status for non-US citizens, valid social security number, etc.). Such requirements may also apply to required clinical and fieldwork, or other out-of-classroom experience necessary to complete degree requirements in the majors related to these professions. These requirements are determined by laws and regulations at both the state and federal levels and are subject to change. *Saint Mary's College strongly urges all admitted and current students to research and understand the appropriate requirements for their intended course of study and profession. Compliance with these requirements is the responsibility of the student and the graduate.* You should become informed and continue to monitor such requirements as laws and other legal requirements are subject to change.

## Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology (63-66 hours)

Code	Title	Credits
SLP 502	Assessment	3
SLP 503	Speech Sound Disorders	3
SLP 505	Early Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 506	Later Childhood Language Disorders	3
SLP 508	Adult Language Disorders I	3
SLP 509	Adult Language Disorders II	3
SLP 510	Research Methods in Speech-Language Pathology	3
SLP 512	Neurology for Speech-Language Pathologists	3
SLP 516	Motor Speech Disorders	3
SLP 517	Fluency	3
SLP 518	Voice	3

SLP 520	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	3
SLP 521	Cleft Palate	3
SLP 522	Dysphagia	3
SLP 523	Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures	3
SLP 524	Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
SLP 525	Counseling	3
SLP 584	Clinical Practicum: Proseminar	1
SLP 585	Clinical Practicum (1 credit hour taken twice)	2
SLP 586	Clinical Practicum (2 credit hours taken twice)	4
SLP 587	Advanced Clinical Practicum	5
Select one of the following:		0-3
SLP 698	Comprehensive Examination	
SLP 699	Thesis (taken three times)	

**Total Credits** 63-66

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## Student Learning Outcomes

- Prepare students with a wide theoretical base for understanding normal development of basic human communication and swallowing processes as well as the nature, causes, evaluation, and treatment of disorders of swallowing and communication, including issues pertaining to culturally diverse populations.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for supervised student clinical education with persons from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, who are delayed or disordered in the development or use of effective communication and/or who display disorders of swallowing and who come from across the life cycle. Opportunities will include access to contemporary technology.
- Develop competence in clinical diagnosis and intervention, interactions with families of individuals with communicative impairments, and collaboration with other professionals for effective and efficient team management of persons with complex disabilities.
- Encourage students to realize their social responsibility first-hand by providing services to those in need. Provide a faith-based education for students as they enter the profession by integrating the Catholic perspective throughout the knowledge and skills of the profession.
- Foster value of diversity, both in culture and opinion, and encourage an attitude of openness and discovery among students, faculty, and staff.

- Challenge faculty, staff, and students to actively involve themselves in meeting the needs of their communities, as highly skilled professionals and good citizens.
- Become eligible for clinical certification (CCC) in speech-language pathology through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
- Promote a value for scientific rigor and a spirit of inquiry among future professionals.
- Empower graduates to function independently as life-long learners.

## Program Director

Erin Connelly  
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## Faculty

E. Connelly, C. Corso, S. Latham, G. Ruiz, N. Tahmasebifard, K. Thomas, and J. Voor

## Speech Language Pathology Courses

### SLP 502 Assessment (3)

Course content involves principles of measurement concepts and qualitative and quantitative assessment in speech-language pathology.

### SLP 503 Speech Sound Disorders (3)

Focus is on assessment, interventions, and instructional strategies for speech sound disorders among children without known organic impairments.

### SLP 505 Early Childhood Language Disorders (3)

Students examine the nature, assessment, and treatment of language disorders in infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

### SLP 506 Later Childhood Language Disorders (3)

Students learn about diagnostic issues and treatment approaches for the school-aged population. Special attention is given to language and literacy interventions aimed at improving phonological processing and oral and written language comprehension and expression.

### SLP 508 Adult Language Disorders I (3)

Information regarding assessment and treatment of persons with acquired aphasia and communication disorders associated with right hemisphere lesions will be explored from neurological, pathophysiological, theoretical, and clinical perspectives.

### SLP 509 Adult Language Disorders II (3)

Information provided related to understanding, assessing and treating acquired adult communication disorders associated with traumatic brain injury and dementia. Disorders will be explored from neurological, pathophysiological, theoretical, and clinical perspectives.

### SLP 510 Research Methods in Speech-Language Pathology (3)

Course content focuses on the speech-language pathologist's role as clinical researcher and presents the need for science to inform clinical practice. Students read and critically analyze existing research within speech-language pathology and review common research designs and data analysis techniques. Students are required to design and complete a collaborative research project.

### SLP 512 Neurology for Speech-Language Pathologists (3)

Course offering provides information related to basic structures and functions of the human neurological system with emphasis on human communication processes and related functions.

### SLP 516 Motor Speech Disorders (3)

Information related to understanding, assessing and treating motor speech disorders (e.g., dysarthrias and apraxia of speech) in children and adults.

### SLP 517 Fluency (3)

Study the behaviors, causative and maintenance factors, diagnosis, and treatment of fluency disorders.

### SLP 518 Voice (3)

A theoretical and applied study of human voice anatomy and physiology and diagnosis and treatment of vocal disorders. This course covers the anatomy and physiology underlying normal voice production, the functional and organic disorders of voice, diagnostic procedures including clinical evaluation and standardized assessments, psychological interviewing principles and counseling of clients with voice disorders and the principles and techniques of voice therapy for children and adults.

### SLP 520 Augmentative and Alternative Communication (3)

The primary purpose of this course is to teach students why, when, and how augmentative and alternative communication and related assistive technology can be used to aid individuals with complex communication needs (e.g., individuals with severe physical impairments, sensory impairments, severe communication disorders, etc.) The impact of cognitive, educational, physical, psychosocial, and linguistic aspects of human behavior on AAC use, characteristics of AAC, AAC assessment and intervention, and AAC research issues and needs will be addressed. The course will enable students to more effectively meet the needs of persons with severe communication disorders.

### SLP 521 Cleft Palate (3)

A study of the effects of craniofacial anomalies on speech development with particular attention to the effects of clefts of the lip and/or palate. Focus is on assessment and treatment of speech, resonance and velopharyngeal dysfunction. Management of associated feeding problems in this population is also discussed.

### SLP 522 Dysphagia (3)

Designed to provide information related to understanding and assessing normal swallowing and understanding the etiology, assessment, and treatment of individuals with feeding/swallowing disorders.

### SLP 523 Multi-Cultural Populations: Communication Disorders Across Cultures (3)

This course examines how diversity offers major challenges and opportunities in the workplace and in the larger society. We will focus on competencies in the form of awareness, understanding and skills that maximize resources and empower individuals and groups with a wide variety of interests, talents, and cultural backgrounds. In today's global environment, college graduates and employees are expected to collaborate with others as members of socially diverse teams, groups, organizations, and communities. The SLP is one of these professions who need to be actively engaged in the assessment and intervention of speech and language development in the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) individuals. This course will dispel the myths about dual language development and the students will obtain the information that is required to properly support young bilingual children and their families as future professionals. The topics will include the need for CLD children continuous, consistent, rich exposure to both languages, typical stages of second-language acquisition, the ways to identify language delay that is the result of an actual disorder, code mixing, the assessment strategies of CLD students, and the intervention plans. This course will also expose students to the background, values/beliefs, and language issues of CLD populations.



**SLP 524 Autism Spectrum Disorders (3)**

Students are provided an introduction to characteristics and communication of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including recommended practices/framework for assessment and facilitation of communication for individuals with ASD.

**SLP 525 Counseling (3)**

Examines the role of speech-language pathologists in the provision of various forms of counseling to individuals with communication disorders and their families.

**SLP 584 Clinical Practicum: Proseminar (1)**

The emphasis of this class is to prepare the student for clinical practicum, laying the foundation for both onsite and offsite placements. Documentation, ethics, intervention, and evaluation techniques are all taught with the assistance of second-year mentors and the clinical supervisor. Class time is used to teach fundamentals and expose students to a variety of professionals working in the field that will describe various placement sites.

**SLP 585 Clinical Practicum (1)**

The student is assigned on campus with 2-3 clients, increasing throughout the course of the semester as need arises or the student is off campus 3 days per week. The increase in credit hours reflects the increased clinical load that the student can expect to take on. On average the student will spend 10-20 hours per week in clinical practicum. This course is repeatable twice.

**SLP 586 Clinical Practicum (2)**

Students in the class will all be assigned to an off campus placement. Some students will remain on campus for the first 3-4 weeks and will serve as mentors to 1st years. The mentors are assigned up to 4 clients and 4 first-year students. They will participate in co-evaluation and treatment of the clients and provide support to the student in the clinic. After their students have taken over the care of the client, the 586 student will proceed to his/her fieldwork site. Students will be off campus 3 days per week for 20 or more hours per week. The seat time component will be divided between in class participation and online instruction, since students can be placed up to an hour away and are not always able to come back to campus after a day in the field.

**SLP 587 Advanced Clinical Practicum (5)**

Student will be off campus 30 or more hours per week involved in direct client care for a minimum of 14 weeks. Depending on the preferences of the student, the clinical need, and the site placements, students will be placed either in one site for the full semester or two sites for 8-10 weeks each (typically school and medical). Students are aware that participation in two site placements may result in them having to continue at their site placement for a few weeks after graduation, but will not impact their ability to finish the program on time. All requirements for grading and clinical clock hours are anticipated to be met prior to graduation.

**SLP 597 Independent Study (1-5)****SLP 698 Comprehensive Examination (0)**

Second year students are required to complete comprehensive examinations in order to qualify for graduation. These are waived if the student successfully completes a thesis. The purpose of these examinations is to evaluate each student's knowledge of concepts, content, procedures and terminology from their graduate studies as well as their ability to apply this knowledge. These examinations are designed to be summative in nature and to address the nine knowledge/skill areas identified by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology.

**SLP 699 Thesis (1)**

A thesis is intended to acquaint the student with research methodology. It is expected that original research or replication of a research project will be undertaken. Students who select the thesis option must identify an advisor that they believe will provide the best guidance in the pursuit of their objectives.