

**WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS**

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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WTAMU website:

[www.wtamu.edu](http://www.wtamu.edu)

Department of Communication Disorders site:

[www.wtamu.edu/cd](http://www.wtamu.edu/cd)

ASHA:

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

West Texas A&M University Department of Communication Disorders does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, handicap, or national origin. West Texas A&M University, according to Affirmative Action Goals, encourages qualified men, women, and minorities of all ages to apply.

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## **About Your Graduate Handbook**

The Graduate Handbook has been designed to provide information about the intents, policies, and procedures for the CD curriculum and program. The CD program is an integral part of the university and the graduate school and the policies and procedures for the speech-language pathology graduate program are aligned with those entities. The handbook contains information about policies and procedures adapted to the CD graduate program.

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS**

### **MISSION AND STRATEGIC GOALS**

## **Mission of Communication Disorders**

The WTAMU Department of Communication Disorders' mission is to:

- Facilitate mastery of knowledge and skills associated with communication sciences and disorders;
- Teach students via coursework and practicum to critically think and solve clinical problems using current research;
- Prepare students for careers in speech-language pathology;
- Fulfill the need for speech-language pathologists in the Texas Panhandle, the state, and the nation;
- Advance the academic and professional field of communication sciences and disorders;
- Practice professionally and ethically based on individual, state, and national-level codes, rules, regulations, and laws;
- Cultivate interprofessional relationships;
- Value cultural differences; and
- Encourage life-long professional learning.

## **Strategic Plan for Communication Disorders**

To achieve its vision and mission, the Department of Communication Disorders has outlined a strategic plan. The faculty routinely discusses the department's goals as they relate to the mission of the university and guidelines put forth by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The faculty regularly reviews and updates policies, curriculum, and research procedures to realize the vision. To ensure meeting the strategic plan's goals, the department analyzes pass rates from comprehensive exams and the PRAXIS, admission requirements, curriculum needs, and feedback including survey and interview data from students, alumni, field preceptors, and employers.

The program's goals are to provide:

- An evidence-based curriculum.
  - The department commits to review textbooks at least every two years for new adoptions to stay current with research and clinical practice.
  - The department commits to have faculty complete continuing education courses that focus on current trends in research, clinical practice, and curriculum.
- Clinical practicum that will produce competent, critically thinking clinicians.
  - The department commits to offer internal and external experiences in educational and medical settings.
  - The department commits to providing students with opportunities to incorporate academic knowledge into clinical experiences as measured by clinical performance evaluations.
- An undergraduate education that adequately prepares students for competitive nation-wide graduate programs.
  - The department maintains a second admissions policy for undergraduate students.
  - The department maintains rigorous coursework at the undergraduate level.
- A well-rounded faculty for clinical and academic instruction.
  - The department commits to increase the breadth and depth of our faculty to include various clinical, research, and professional experiences.
  - The department commits to increase the breadth and depth of our faculty to include master's level and tenure-track Ph.D. educators from various clinical, academic, and professional backgrounds.
- Evidence-based and patient-centered services to the Texas Panhandle and surrounding communities.
  - The department commits to offering the best available clinical services for communication disorders in the state-of-the-art WT Speech and Hearing Clinic.
  - The department commits to continuously evaluate, enhance, and develop the WT Speech and Hearing Clinic's procedures and programs as an instructional and clinical facility.
  - The department commits to cultivating referral sources and professional relationships to provide the best quality of care and educational experience for both patients and students.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES:**

1. The PRAXIS three -year average pass rate will stay above the expected 80%.
2. The program will continue to have a 96%-100% pass rate on comprehensive exams.
3. The program will continue to have above the expected 80% on job placement. This goal is no longer required to reported to ASHA/CAA.
4. The program will continue to have above the expected 80% for on time graduation.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. The student must have demonstrated knowledge of the biological sciences, physical sciences, statistics, and the social/behavioral sciences.
2. The student must have demonstrated knowledge of basic human communication and swallowing processes, including the appropriate biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural bases. The applicant must have demonstrated the ability to integrate information pertaining to normal and abnormal human development across the life span.
3. The student must have demonstrated knowledge of communication and swallowing disorders and differences, including the appropriate etiologies, characteristics, anatomical/physiological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural correlates in the following areas: artic, fluency, voice/resonance (including respiration and phonation), receptive and expressive language in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, hearing, including the impact on speech and language, swallowing, cognitive aspects of communication, social aspects of communication, and augmentative and alternative communication modalities.

## GRADUATE CURRICULUM

ASHA requires a stand-alone statistics course, a course in either chemistry OR physics (physical science), a behavioral science, and a biology course to receive your licensure. 25 hours of observation will be obtained prior to graduate clinical practicum.

<b>First Year/Graduate One</b>			
CD 6315 Research Methods in CD	3 hrs	CD 6305 Neuromotor Speech Disorders	3 hrs
CD 6370 Pediatric Speech Sounds Disorders	3 hrs	CD 6320 Language Disorders in Children: Birth to 5	3 hrs
CD 6375 Language Disorders in School-Age Children	3 hrs	CD 6340 CD Related to Dementia and Head Injury	3 hrs
CD 6398 Clinical Practicum	<u>3 hrs</u>	CD 6450 Dysphagia	4 hrs
	12 hrs	CD 6398 Clinical Practicum	<u>3 hrs</u>
			16 hrs
<b>Summer I/Summer II</b>			
CD 6335 Fluency Disorders	3 hrs	CD 6380 Evidence Based Practice in CD	<u>3 hrs</u>
CD 6398 Clinical Practicum (conts in SU2)	<u>3 hrs</u>		3 hrs
	6 hrs		
<b>Second Year/Graduate Two</b>			
CD 6330 Aphasia and Right Hemisphere Syndrome	3 hrs	CD 6699 External Clinical Practicum	<u>6 hrs</u>
CD 6325 Augmentative Communication	3 hrs		3 hrs
CD 6410 Voice Disorders	4 hrs	**CD 6302 Thesis (Optional)	(9 hrs)
CD 6399 External Clinical Practicum	<u>3 hrs</u>		
	13 hrs		
**CD 6301 Thesis (Optional)	(16 hrs)		

The Thesis option will add 6 hours to your degree plan. If you elect to complete a thesis you will need to identify a topic, a chair, and a committee within the first semester of graduate school. Dr. Cross can provide you with the timeline for thesis.

**Graduating from our graduate program meets all Texas licensure requirements as indicated by the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology of Texas. WTAMU's graduate program is also accredited with the CAA and ASHA. Other states may require additional courses/paperwork for state licensure.**



## **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

### **Plan of Study**

Each student will receive a copy of the graduate curriculum during orientation, which serves as their plan of study (degree plan). The plan of study is filed at the Graduate School and becomes the basis for the graduation check by the Graduate School.

### **Changes in Plan of Study**

If a student decides to complete their plan of study via the thesis option, the student will notify a program academic advisor. The plan of study will be updated, if a student chooses the thesis option. Changes to the plan of study will be communicated to a program academic advisor and the department chair. The new plan of study will then be filed at the Graduate School.

### **Students with a Disability**

An alternate form of administration of any examination will be available to students who have appropriately followed the procedure for students with a disability. (See WTAMU Student Handbook).

### **Filing for Graduation**

It is the student's responsibility to be informed of the filing dates, graduation application dates, and fees required for graduation. This information is available from the Graduate School Office in the Kilgore Research Center. Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines associated with graduation and the completion of the degree. All students who wish to receive a diploma must file for graduation even if they do not intend to attend the graduation ceremony.

### **Semester Advising**

A program academic advisor will enter and approve each semester's courses into Buff Advisor following the graduate curriculum guide. Prior to the beginning of the student's first semester, they will receive an advising email. The advising email will provide the necessary steps for registering in the first semester's planned coursework. The email will also notify the student of any missing undergraduate transcript requirements for your eventual ASHA certification application. Each subsequent semester, a group advising session will be held to review the upcoming semester's coursework as well as the steps to complete registration. A program academic advisor will verify that the student's on schedule and completing all courses with a 'B' or better each semester. Students requiring a change in their plan of study will be advised individually by a program academic advisor.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

The Department of Communication Disorders utilizes comprehensive exams as a summative assessment for student learning. The exams are administered over two days and are given in the Harrington Center computer lab. There are eight to nine subtests, covering all areas taught during your graduate curriculum. There are also subtests that ensure that the ASHA Big 9 (to include Audiology and Aural Rehab), evidence based practice and research are evaluated.

Comprehensive evaluations are scored using a rubric and in a blind format (student's exams are coded by their Buff ID number). This ensures that all exams are scored equitably.

### **Remediation Plans- CD 6392 Special Topics**

If a student does not pass a section of the comprehensive evaluation then remediation is required. You will register for CD 6392 Special Topics in your final spring if remediation is needed. A remediation plan is agreed upon by the instructor of the section not passed and the chair of the department. The graduate student will enroll in Special Topics for their last spring to cover the hours needed for remediation.

The first remediation will be in written format. This includes, but is not limited to, another test (same format as the original) or a paper. If this remediation is not passed, the student will move to the second stage of remediation.

The second remediation will be an oral exam. If the student desires to meet in person, a meeting will be setup in the AMA center. The student may also choose to setup this remediation in an online format such as Zoom. If this remediation is not passed, the student will not graduate on time. They will extend their program and re-take the content area in question. After the content is again passed, the content will again be assessed using a COMP.

## **THESIS OPTION**

Each student is presented the option to complete a thesis during the first advising meeting with Dr. Cross. If a student determines that they are interested in the thesis track, they are advised to identify a chair and schedule a meeting with said chair. During the meeting with the chair a topic is decided on, a committee is formed, and a timeline is established. If the student requires human subjects then an IRB is obtained utilizing our resources in the Killgore Research Center, Graduate School.

The actual courses assigned for thesis (CD 6301 and 6302) are taken in the second year of the program; however, the IRB process and literature review will begin in the first year of the program. This track will allow the student to opt out of CD 6380.

Upon completion the student will defend their thesis. The defense will be an open invitation to the members of the faculty, the program, and the college. The committee will determine if the student successfully passed their defense, and the Graduate School will be notified for their records.

Please refer to the Graduate School website to determine specific publishing/printing protocols for a complete thesis.

<http://www.wtamu.edu/webres/File/Thesis%20Guide%20January%202017.pdf>

WTAMU Communication Disorders  
Student Code of Conduct

The WTAMU Student Code of Life clearly addresses Academic Integrity. ASHA Code of Ethics also clearly addresses professional and ethical behavior.

The WTAMU Communication Disorders Department will not tolerate behavior or actions that violate the Code of Life or ASHA Code of Ethics.

The following is a list of offenses that will result in immediate removal from the course/program:

- Unprofessional behaviors in class or clinic, when remediation is unsuccessful
- Collaborating on ANY assignments, when not required by the instructor
- Cheating on ANY assignment, including
  - Homework assignments
  - Reading assignments
  - Comprehensive Exams
  - Comprehensive Exam Remediation
  - Exams
  - Papers
  - Research
  - Quizzes

Your signature below confirms that you have read and understand this policy. There will be zero tolerance. There will be no further warnings.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM**

The graduate school requires a 3.0 CUM GPA to graduate. The student must earn a B or better on all academic coursework to successfully meet standards. If a student earns a C in a course they will be removed from clinic in the next semester to focus on their didactic courses. The class must also be repeated with a passing grade the next time it is offered. This will likely extend your program. The student who completes a semester under a 3.0 GPA will go on probation with the graduate school. If the student does not complete the next semester with a 3.0 GPA or higher they will be removed/suspended from the program. A suspension will restrict your ability to take any class at WTAMU for 1 academic year and will remove you from the CD graduate program.

## **APPENDICES**

**ASHA CODE OF ETHICS**

[HTTP://WWW.ASHA.ORG/UPLOADEDFILES/ET2010-00309.PDF](http://www.asha.org/uploadedfiles/ET2010-00309.pdf)

**CAA INFORMATION**

[HTTP://WWW.ASHA.ORG/ACADEMIC/ACCREDITATION/](http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/)

**SIGNATURE PAGE  
WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
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**ACADEMIC MANUAL**

**I HAVE READ AND REVIEWED THE WTAMU UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC MANUAL. I UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE PROVISIONS, AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CODES LISTED THEREIN.**

**I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE CODES CAN RESULT IN ONE OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- **ACADEMIC SUSPENSION**
- **CLINICAL SUSPENSION**
- **REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM**
- **REMOVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY**
- **DELAYED GRADUATION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**STUDENT'S SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**