

West Texas A&M University

Department of

Speech & Hearing Sciences

Graduate Student Handbook

Fall 2025

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Dr. Angela Spaulding, Graduate School Dean
Dr. Zeth Collom, Department Chair & Program Director
Mrs. Darla Marcear, Clinical Coordinator
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This handbook belongs to:

My academic advisor is:

Advisor's Office:

Office Telephone:

WTAMU website:

www.wtamu.edu

Department of Speech & Hearing website:

www.wtamu.edu/dshs

ASHA:

www.asha.org

West Texas A&M University Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences 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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The Graduate Handbook has been designed to provide information about the intents, policies, and procedures for the graduate SLP curriculum and program. The graduate SLP 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 graduate SLP program.

Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences

Mission and Strategic Goals

Vision:

The vision of the department is to prepare future speech-language pathologists through a rigorous education in order to advance communication, swallowing, and quality of life for all populations.

Mission:

- Teach students via classroom and clinical experiences the knowledge and skills associated with speech and hearing sciences;
- Fulfill the need for speech-language pathologists in the Texas Panhandle, the state, and the nation; and
- Cultivate the academic and professional field of speech and hearing sciences.

Strategic Plan for Speech & Hearing Sciences

To achieve its vision and mission, the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences has outlined the following strategic plan. Annually, the faculty discusses the department's strategic plan as it relates to the mission of the college, university, and guidelines put forth by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

- Teach students via classroom and clinical experiences the knowledge and skills associated with speech and hearing sciences;
 - We will accomplish this mission by:
 - Measuring students' first attempt passing comprehensive exams by averaging their performance across a 3-year period
 - 90% pass rate; percentage total number of comprehensive exams attempted and passed first attempt
 - Measuring students' first attempt passing didactic coursework (95% pass rate)
 - Maintaining accreditation status in speech-language pathology
- Fulfill the need for speech-language pathologists in the Texas Panhandle, the state, and the nation;
 - We will accomplish this mission by:
 - Measuring students' meeting passing criteria for clinical scores in treatment, additional clinical skills, and PIPQ in their final externship (95% pass rate)
 - Measuring percentage of students meeting graduation requirements (90% meeting requirements)
 - Measuring percentage of students completing the program (95% completion)
 - Maintaining no less than 40 graduate students enrolled in the Master's program
- The faculty will cultivate the academic and professional field of speech and hearing sciences;
 - We will accomplish this mission by:
 - Creating an advisory board for the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
 - Developing one professional learning experience each within a three-year period
 - Earning the required number of CEUs to maintain licensure

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.

Program Level Learning Outcomes:

PLLO 1. Accountability and Ethical Practice: Students will apply ASHA's Code of Ethics; adhere to federal, state, and institutional regulations (e.g., HIPAA and FERPA); and uphold the rights and dignity of individuals receiving services to develop ethical, accountable, and professional behaviors.

PLLO 2. Foundations of Communication and Swallowing Sciences: Students will integrate foundational knowledge of communication and swallowing processes to differentiate typical from disordered functioning across the lifespan based upon various etiologies (e.g., biological, physiological, neurological, developmental, psychosocial, individual).

PLLO 3. Identification and Prevention: Students will screen for, recognize, and refer individuals at risk for communication and swallowing disorders in collaboration with patients, families, and care teams using established and researched principles of prevention and early identification.

PLLO 4. Comprehensive Evaluation and Clinical Reasoning: Students will conduct comprehensive, evidence-informed assessments by selecting, administering, and interpreting appropriate tools across populations and settings, considering each individual's functional needs and goals in various contexts with respect to the principles of various frameworks including evidence-based practice and patient- and family-centered care.

PLLO 5. Individualized Intervention Planning: Students will design and implement individualized intervention plans that reflect current evidence, clinical judgment, and patient and family values to optimize meaningful communication and swallowing outcomes.

PLLO 6. Person- and Family-Centered Interprofessional Practice: Students will collaborate effectively with clients, families, and interprofessional teams to provide coordinated, person- and family-centered services across healthcare, education, and community settings.

PLLO 7. Effective Communication: Students will utilize effective oral and/or written communication across service contexts for a variety of professional responsibilities (e.g.,

educating, counseling, documenting, briefing) as appropriate for various specific audiences (e.g., patients/clients, families, education personnel, colleagues, other healthcare providers).

PLLO 8. Evidence-Based Reflective Practice

Students will determine, justify, and reflect upon effective diagnostic and management decisions using clinical practice guidelines; critically appraised empirical evidence; and clinical outcome data including client and caregiver input with emerging professional judgement.

PLLO 9. Technology and Instrumentation

Students will use appropriate technology, instrumentation, and digital tools to support assessment, intervention, documentation, and outcome monitoring across service delivery models.

PLLO 10. Education and Advocacy

Students will educate clients, families, and the public about communication and swallowing disorders using accurate, accessible language, and advocate for access to services across the healthcare and education systems.

PLLO 11. Professional Development

Students will complete various reflective, team building, peer feedback, and related exercises and experiences to build early skills related to lifelong learning in the profession (e.g., continuing education, advanced certification, terminal degree pursuit) and readiness for leadership (e.g., clinical education, supervision, teaching, business management).

PLLO 12. Systems of Care and Service Delivery Models

Students will adapt service delivery based on an understanding of healthcare and educational systems, including transitions of care, funding mechanisms, and practice settings to support person- and family-centered care.

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.

First Year/Graduate One			
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 (with Lab)	4 hrs
	12 hrs	CD 6398 Clinical Practicum	<u>3 hrs</u>
			16 hrs
Summer I/Summer II			
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		
Second Year/Graduate Two			
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 (with Lab)	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. Collom 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 have a 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. The Graduate School will be emailing these to you in the first semester of your program.

Changes in Plan of Study

All changes to the Plan of Study will go through Dr. Collom. 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

Each semester Dr. Collom and Dr. Spencer will verify that you are on schedule, completing all courses with a 'B' or better, and are ready for "green-lighting". This opens your account for registration. Appointments will be scheduled as needed to discuss your progress.

Comprehensive Exams

The Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences 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 oral format. Students will be provided specific prompts, concepts, or clinical cases/scenarios in which they have to orally respond and explain or clarify. In some instances, a brief demonstration or related performance related task may be required. A rubric or related metric will be developed to ensure validity and reliability of the oral exam.

Successful remediation is 80% or its equivalent. Students will be required to complete oral examinations in a modality or format as determined by faculty and department chair.

In the event that the first remediation is not successful, the second remediation will be a written exam. This written exam may include but is not limited to responding to case studies/vignettes, another conceptual test, creating a resource, or any additional written formats and modalities based upon the student's individual needs. 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. Collom. 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 Speech & Hearing Sciences
Academic Integrity & 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 Speech & Hearing Sciences 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>

CAA Information

<http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/>

Signature Page
West Texas A&M University
Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences

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