

Master of Science in Communication Disorders Program Level Learning Outcomes (2025 to 2028)

The master's program consults and adheres to two related but separate sets of standards specific to knowledge and skills mandated for national certification as well as academic accreditation by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). For certification, these standards are found primarily in IV: Knowledge and V: Standards. For academic accreditation, these guidelines are found in Standard 3.0 (Curriculum) and 5.0 (Assessment). To achieve our mission and vision with consideration to these various standards, the master of science (M.S.) degree in communication disorders has the following twelve (12) program-level learning outcomes (PLLO) to prepare graduates to be competitive and marketable clinical fellows in their first year as professional speech-language pathologists after graduation.

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.

PLLOs are selected and then expanded upon for each graduate course's specific learning outcomes and objectives. PLLOs can be addressed either directly or indirectly with evidence. Although all PLLOs are addressed throughout the program, not every individual course or practicum may address all PLLOs.