



## Educator Preparation Program Guide for Students

# COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

University of Massachusetts Amherst

### Brief Program Description

The Department of Communication Disorders offers curricula leading to the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in communication disorders, the Master of Arts (M.A.) in communication disorders with a concentration in speech-language pathology, the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.), and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree with a concentration in either speech-language pathology (SLP) or audiology (AUD). The master's program in communication disorders (Au.D. program) and the Ph.D. program (with a concentration in audiology and completion of the clinical certification tract) are accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Students enrolling in the M.A. can participate in the Educator Preparation Program through which they can meet the academic and clinical requirements needed to qualify for state licensure to work in the public schools

### Who May Apply

It is expected that students applying to the M.A. Program will have had an undergraduate background in communication disorders and sciences or will have completed, or be concurrently enrolled, in the prerequisite course work required for admission to the master's program.

### Admission Process and Criteria

Students seeking admission to the M.A. degree program must submit a completed Graduate School application form, official transcripts of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, and two letters of recommendation. In addition, foreign students must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and have achieved a score of 550 or higher.

As the sequencing of coursework and clinical practica for the master's program is quite rigid in order to meet the Council of Academic Accreditation's standards, and the program is designed to commence with the fall semester, admissions to the master's program are usually limited to the fall admissions period. Therefore, students interested in applying to the master's program should submit their applications for fall admissions (i.e., January 15 deadline). Students will not be admitted to the program for the spring semester unless they have completed graduate level coursework equivalent to the coursework that would have been completed by a student who was admitted for the previous fall admission period.

### Course of Study

The curriculum for the professional degree program in speech-language pathology is designed to provide the academic and clinical preparation necessary for the provision of scientific, competent, and professional services by speech-language pathologists. The curriculum allows the student to meet the academic and clinical requirements for the American Speech-

Language-Hearing Associations (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language-Hearing Pathology (CCC-SLP) and state licensure as a Speech-Language Pathologist. In addition, students enrolled in the master's program with a concentration in speech and language pathology should be eligible to apply to the Massachusetts Board of Education for licensure as a teacher of the speech, language and hearing-impaired upon completion of their degree program. *[Note: To be eligible to participate in an off-campus practicum in a public school in Massachusetts (a requirement for teacher licensure), students who have not already done so will be required to take and achieve a passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) early in their master's program.]*

Students must complete all of the required courses in speech and language pathology in order to be eligible for graduation and professional credentialing. Students may be waived from one or more of the required courses only if comparable course work has been completed at another institution or previously at this institution. Under no circumstance, however, will a student be permitted to graduate with less than 30 graduate degree credits, as required by the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and/or the necessary distribution of academic course work and clinical practicum experiences to be eligible for certification in either speech-language pathology or audiology. While all clinical practica must be taken for credit, no more than six credits of clinical practicum may be applied to the minimum 30 credits of graduate course work required for the awarding of the master's degree.

In addition to academic courses, students must complete a minimum of 25 hours of clinical observation and 375 hours of supervised clinical experience with individuals representing a variety of communication pathologies and ages. Clinical experience is gained initially in the Center for Language, Speech and Hearing and then subsequently in at least two additional off-campus cooperating programs (e.g., hospitals, schools, clinics, private practice offices, community centers). At least 325 of the required

400 hours must be obtained at the graduate level and the student must have achieved the appropriate distribution of clinical hours to be eligible for certification in speech-language pathology (CCC-SLP). Clinical hours obtained as an undergraduate at another program will be credited toward the 400-hour minimum (up to the maximum number allowable) if appropriate documentation of the supervised experience is provided. In addition, 100 supervised clinical hours must be completed in the schools to be eligible to apply to the Massachusetts Board of Education for licensure as a teacher of the speech, language and hearing-impaired.

In addition to the direct service requirements, all students are required to complete 25 hours of observation of evaluation and management of patients with communication disorders by a professional holding the appropriate ASHA certification prior to the initiation of any direct service provision.

The M.A. program typically requires two years of full-time study for those who have an undergraduate background in communication disorders and sciences. Students without the necessary undergraduate background will be required to make up any deficiencies from the department's undergraduate course offerings and, consequently, may take more than the average amount of time to complete their degrees.

### Advising

Students are assigned advisors upon admission to the program and are strongly advised to consult their academic advisors about the content and sequence of their academic and clinical course work on a regular basis. In addition, the Clinic Director and clinical instructors are available for clinical advising.

### Career Opportunities and Job Placement

Career information will be discussed in practicum classes, with academic advisors and with clinical staff.

### Program Specific Information

A number of teaching, research, and pre-professional training assistantships are available through the department each year on a competitive basis. The number of assistantships and the amount of financial assistance offered each year are dependent on the availability of funds and the specific guidelines of the funding sources. Most assistantships provide a weekly stipend during the academic year and a waiver of most tuition costs and curriculum fees. In addition to the assistantships offered through the department, a limited number of university fellowships are available through the Graduate School and on a competitive basis. Students interested in being considered for an assistantship or fellowship should indicate this interest on the Graduate School application form at the time of application.

For additional information regarding financial aid or funding opportunities, call 413-577-0555, or contact [www.umass.edu/umfa/pages/grad.html](http://www.umass.edu/umfa/pages/grad.html).

For more information, please contact:

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## LICENSURE INFORMATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL):** The MTEL is required for licensure by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The test has two parts: the Communication and Literacy Skills (C&LS) test and the Subject area test(s). The University's policy is that:

- Undergraduates must achieve a passing score on the C&LS test as a pre-requisite for admission.
- Post-baccalaureate and graduate students must achieve a passing score on the C&LS test in their first semester of study.
- All students must pass the Subject test(s) (if one has been developed for that licensure field) before enrolling in the practicum.

**Licensure Application Process:** The Educator Licensure Office (ELO) in the School of Education coordinates the licensure application process for all University Educator Preparation program students who have completed all licensing requirements. The ELO provides information to guide students in using the Electronic Licensure and Recruitment system (ELAR), a system in which students apply for educator licenses online. The ELAR system requires a student to apply for his/her license online (including the payment of license fees) and send an official copy of his/her transcript to the ELO in Room 130 Furcolo Hall (being sure that the transcript includes the "Institutional Recommendation for Educator Licensure"). After individuals have applied online, the ELO endorses/recommends candidates for licensure via ELAR. The University Licensure Officer also assists students in completing applications for licensure in other states, as necessary.

**Career and Job Search Assistance:** The School of Education, in collaboration with Career Services, sponsors a Job Fair for prospective educators. The Job Fair draws school districts from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. In addition, Career Services provides information and registration for the Massachusetts Educational Recruiting Consortium (MERC), a recruitment fair attended by school districts from across the nation.

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