The M.A. program in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst offers a limited opportunity for incoming students to participate in clinical experiences in the summer semester before the start of the academic year.

Typically, programs start the clinical experience in the fall semester in coordination with academic courses. However, some incoming students may be eligible for the Early Start Program, which is an opportunity for incoming Speech-Language Pathology Master of Arts degree students to begin their clinical training early, during the summer before their first fall semester. The benefit of this program is that you have the opportunity to initiate your clinical education before the rigors of your academic courses begin.

The Center for Language, Speech and Hearing, will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday from the first week of June until the middle of August. Successful candidates for the Early Start Program must be initially available for all of the hours the clinic is open. Once the clients’ schedules are finalized you can schedule your other responsibilities, e.g., part-time jobs. The Early Start Program is approximately twenty hours per week in planning, direct service, and clinical documentation.

The first few days of the summer semester are an intensive training to introduce clinical skills, techniques, and documentation.

We will accept a limited number of graduate students into the Early Start Program. Please contact us at (413) 545-4011 if you have any questions.

The rest of the incoming Speech-Language Pathology class will start clinical experiences in September. The Speech Language Clinic provides treatment services and conducts evaluations on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays throughout the year. However, the first few days of clinic in your fall semester will be devoted to a Clinical Orientation in order to discuss clinical expectations, techniques and skills, talk about clinical documentation, and to introduce you to the policies and procedures for your clinical training.

“The early start summer program was a unique opportunity to start developing my clinical skills in a challenging and personalized learning environment. I am so grateful to have learned from two such wonderful mentors this summer. Jane and Karen guided me through the many parts of working in a clinical setting, including lesson plan development, data analysis, and clinical documentation. They provided detailed feedback on my progress throughout the summer and always made me feel comfortable asking questions. It was great to be able to learn from two people with different clinical backgrounds while seeing a variety of clients in treatment sessions and evaluations. The early start summer program was a great way to focus on challenging myself in the clinical environment without having to worry about the other pieces of graduate school at the same time. Going forward I think that my experience this summer will help me be more aware of the clinical applications of my coursework. I couldn't have asked for a better way to begin my clinical training.”
Abby Pugh, class of 2019, Early Start Participant

"Choosing Early Start was the best decision I made in graduate school. In doing so, I was able to understand the ins-and-outs of the clinic without simultaneously worrying about academic coursework. I was also able to begin my off-campus placements earlier than my classmates. Although, the Spring semester is more rigorous than the Fall it was definitely worth it! I will end my last semester with a "bonus" medical placement, which will give me more confidence during my CFY."

Kara Jerez, class of 2018, Early Start Participant