

**KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

# **CSD Graduate Handbook**

**Program in Communication  
Sciences and Disorders**

Department of Applied Human Sciences

**KSU SPEECH & HEARING CENTER  
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## INTRODUCTION

Communication Sciences and Disorders is an area of professional specialization that developed out of concern for people with speech, language, and hearing disorders. The program in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) has been an established presence at Kansas State University for more than 50 years. The goal of the CSD program is to educate clinicians who are competent to help children and adults with difficulties in any aspect of oral and written communication or swallowing. It is part of the Department of Applied Human Sciences, a multidisciplinary department in which sociologists and psychologists, speech-language pathologists and audiologists, economists, gerontologists, social workers, and couple and family therapists address the broad social issues affecting the development of individuals and families.

The master's degree (M.S.) offered in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Kansas State University is focused on speech-language pathology. It is a full-time, two-year program with consecutive semester enrollment, starting either in the summer/fall or spring semesters. The majority (about 90%) of CSD undergraduate majors complete the program in 6 semesters (including summers). The exceptions typically relate to students who have deficiencies in their undergraduate curriculum from another program. The mission (objectives) of this professional education program is to:

1. Prepare speech-language pathologists to fill diverse roles in the broad area of speech-language pathology and in a variety of professional environments consistent with evidence-based practice;
2. Provide the student with knowledge about the changing role of the speech-language pathologist within our society and with opportunities to learn how research informs that change;
3. Facilitate an interdisciplinary view of disorders of human communication;
4. Provide speech-language pathologists with the coursework and practicum experiences needed to meet national standards for clinical knowledge and skills and to earn the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) awarded by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Kansas State University is fully accredited by the North Central Accrediting Association. The master's education program (M.S.) in speech-language pathology at Kansas State University is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2200 Research Boulevard #310, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 800-498-2071 or 301-296-5700.

This document is designed to acquaint students in speech-language pathology with the Program's policies at the graduate level. Topics include:

- Graduate Admission
- Communication Sciences & Disorders Program Requirements
- Courses for Graduate Study
- GPA Requirements & Academic Intervention
- Knowledge & Skills including Clinical Experiences
- Student Research & Service
- Faculty Information
- Advising and Student Support
- Master's Comprehensive Examinations
- Questions & Special Notes

Additional information about graduate studies at Kansas State University is available in the Graduate Catalog and also at [Graduate School \(k-state.edu\)](https://www.k-state.edu/graduate-school/) and [Communication Sciences and Disorders \(k-state.edu\)](https://www.k-state.edu/communication-sciences-and-disorders/).

## GRADUATE ADMISSION

To be considered for graduate admission, the applicant must have:

1. A bachelor's degree
2. Adequate undergraduate preparation in speech-language pathology or equivalent evidence of an appropriate background for undertaking an advanced degree program
3. An overall undergraduate average of 3.0 or better
4. An undergraduate average of 3.0 or better in the major
5. A personal statement regarding professional interests and goals (one page)
6. Resume
7. Three recommendation forms and letters of recommendation completed by instructors or possibly other individuals who can attest to the applicant's suitability for graduate study in speech-language pathology.

Graduate applications are submitted through [CSDCAS](https://www.k-state.edu/graduate-school/centralized-application-service/) (Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service). Search for Kansas State University and select the semester for consideration (Summer, Fall, or Spring).

Deadlines: **January 15** for summer/fall admission and by **October 1** for spring admission. *Please note that deadlines for international applicants are January 8 for fall admission and August 1 for spring admission.*

Applicants who have been denied admission may apply once more to the program.

A student who does not have adequate undergraduate preparation in speech-language pathology may be considered and recommended for admission with provisional standing. (It typically adds 3 semesters to the 2-year graduate sequence if all courses are deficient.) The courses listed below, or approved equivalents, are the required undergraduate courses.

CSD 347	Introduction to Phonetics (3)
CSD 360	Structure and Function of the Speech Mechanism (4)
CSD 361	Hearing Science (3)
CSD 442	Developmental Psycholinguistics (3)
CSD 443	Language Assessment and Intervention I (3)
CSD 446	Speech Sound Disorders (4)
CSD 515	Laboratory in Acoustic Phonetics (1)
CSD 549	Clinical Procedures in Communication Disorders (3)
CSD 560	Clinical Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders (3)
CSD 567	Hearing Assessment and Intervention (3)
CSD 580	Neurological Basis of Communication & Swallowing Disorders (3)

*\*Course addressing "Hearing and Communication" (aural rehabilitation) required for Fall 2024 starts and beyond.*

Full standing is attained automatically upon completion of at least nine hours of course work for graduate credit with a B or better and upon removal of any deficiency that was specified at the time of admission. Students admitted on probation may be denied continued enrollment if they do not achieve full standing or if they receive any grade less than a B. Up to 10 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred from another accredited graduate school. The graduate faculty of the CSD Program must approve courses accepted for graduate credit from another institution. Graduate students are required to spend at least one academic year in residence.

## CSD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The program at Kansas State University is designed to meet the Standards and Implementation for the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and to also meet requirements for licensure in Kansas.

Graduates of the program are highly recruited because of their comprehensive academic preparation and their clinical flexibility for serving individuals in any environment. All graduates successfully gain employment following their graduation. The importance of this approach in training is substantiated in reviewing the current job settings of the most recent graduates, as approximately 60% are employed in educational/pediatric-based settings and 40% are employed in medical/adult settings.

For the Master of Science degree, the following requirements must be met:

1. Completion of a minimum of 31 graduate credit hours in academic coursework, with additional credits from research, practica, and externships. (See the section on Required Graduate Courses for Speech-Language Pathology.)
2. Completion of two unique externships, typically full-day placements extending throughout the semester at an approved off-campus site.
3. Completion of a minimum of 400 total clinical hours (including 375 direct clinical contact hours).
4. Demonstration of clinical competency as judged by the Program faculty.

Students selecting the thesis option must also complete six hours of thesis credit. The student must design, implement, and produce a written thesis on a research topic in accordance with Department of Applied Human Sciences guidelines, and successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination. The Research Experience course (1) is not required for the thesis option.

Students selecting the non-thesis option complete a Research Experience course (1) during one semester of their graduate program, and successfully complete the comprehensive written examination and oral examination if indicated.

The above graduate curriculum in Communication Sciences and Disorders prepares students with the basic course requirements for certification as a speech-language pathologist by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), and also prepares students to pass the national examination in speech-language pathology & audiology (NESPA). The pass rate of KSU graduates (first try) is 100% since year 2004, representing more than 200 graduates.

## COURSES FOR GRADUATE STUDY

### Academic Courses

<b>CSD 725</b>	<b>Augmentative &amp; Alternative Communication (2)</b> This course examines the area of augmentative and alternative communication for people across the lifespan. The etiologies and communicative needs of current and prospective users of AAC, as well as procedures for evaluation are addressed. The course includes strategies and procedures for implementing AAC systems for people who are permanently or temporarily severely communicatively impaired. Pr.: CSD 360 and 549	Summer
<b>CSD 741</b>	<b>Stuttering (3)</b> Research and theory concerning etiology, characteristics, assessment, and treatment of individuals with disfluency problems. Pr.: CSD 560	Fall
<b>CSD 742</b>	<b>Language Assessment and Intervention II (3)</b> Theory and research concerning language disorders in school-aged children are presented. Specific language assessment and intervention methodologies for this population are reviewed. Dialectal and bilingual considerations for assessment and intervention are addressed. Pr.: CSD 443	Spring
<b>CSD 743</b>	<b>Communication Impairments in Autism Spectrum Disorders (2)</b> This course provides an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) including characteristics, diagnosis, and etiologies. Interventions used by speech-language pathologists for enhancing communication for individuals with ASD across the lifespan will be presented, with a focus on using evidence-based practice guidelines to determine programs of treatment. Current developments and research findings related to assessment and intervention will be discussed. Pr.: CSD 443	Summer
<b>CSD 745</b>	<b>Motor Speech Disorders (3)</b> An introduction to motor speech disorders including an overview of the neurological system. Research and practical knowledge concerning etiologies, evaluation, and principles of treatment are addressed. Pr.: CSD 580	Fall
<b>CSD 748</b>	<b>Cleft Palate (1)</b> An overview of communicative disorders related to cleft palate and other structurally-based conditions affecting velopharyngeal function. Research and practical knowledge related to the characteristics, assessment, and treatment of these communicative problems are addressed. Pr.: CSD 360 and 446	Spring
<b>CSD 750</b>	<b>Voice Disorders (3)</b> The etiologies and characteristics of voice disorders, as well as general principles of assessment, prevention, and treatment of these disorders, are presented. The role of the speech-language pathologist in rehabilitation planning following treatment for laryngeal cancer is also addressed. Pr.: CSD 360	Fall
<b>CSD 780</b>	<b>Instrumental Measurement for Clinical Application (2)</b> This course addresses instrumentation and measurement procedures for clinical purposes. Particular emphasis is placed on measurement of physiological aspects of speech breathing and acoustic and physiological aspects of phonation. Pr.: CSD 748 and 750	Spring

<b>CSD 841</b>	<b>Acquired Language &amp; Cognitive Disorders (4)</b> Study of acquired language and cognitive-communicative disorders in adults. Content addresses research and applied knowledge concerning etiologies, evaluation, and treatment of aphasia and communication deficits that result from right hemisphere damage, dementia, and traumatic brain injury. Pr.: CSD 580	Spring
<b>CSD 844</b>	<b>Dysphagia (3)</b> Study of normal and abnormal swallowing in children and adults. Procedures for assessment, diagnosis, and intervention are explored. Pr.: CSD 745 or concurrent enrollment	Fall
<b>CSD 851</b>	<b>Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology (2)</b> An overview of current professional issues in speech-language pathology. Primary topics include professional and ethical practices, scope of practice and service delivery, preparation for employment, and credentialing. Because this is a capstone course, the student must be within three semesters/terms of the graduate degree. Pr.: CSD 705 and consent of instructor	Spring
<b>CSD 701</b>	<b>Research Experience in Communication Sciences &amp; Disorders (1)</b> Documents research competencies that relate to research knowledge, evidence-based practices (EBP), clinical questions, and practice guidelines. Graduate students complete a research experience during one semester of their graduate program. The research experience is mentored by a graduate faculty member.	Fall, Spring
<b>CSD 899</b>	<b>Master's Research (Variable Credit)</b> Individual research problems which may form the basis for the master's thesis or report. Pr.: Consent of major professor. (Thesis option only)	Fall, Spring, Summer

## Clinical Courses

<b>CSD 705</b>	<b>Practicum in Speech-Language Pathology (Variable Credit)</b> Supervised practice in the use of the methods and materials of speech-language pathology. Pr.: CSD 449 and consent of instructor	Fall, Spring, Summer
<b>CSD 706</b>	<b>Practicum in Audiology (Variable Credit)</b> Supervised practice in the use of equipment, materials, and methods of audiology. Pr.: CSD 567 or concurrent enrollment and consent of instructor	Fall, Spring, Summer
<b>CSD 847</b>	<b>Externship in Speech-Language Pathology (Variable Credit)</b> Clinical practicum in off-campus sites, including supervised experience in evaluation and treatment of children and adults with communication disorders. Pr.: CSD 705 and consent of the instructor (One placement is in a Child/Pediatric setting & one placement is in an Adult/Medical setting)	Fall, Spring, Summer

## **GPA REQUIREMENTS & ACADEMIC INTERVENTION**

A minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 must be maintained at the graduate level. A student is placed on academic probation if the GPA is lower than 3.0 or if the student's program of study committee determines that the student's progress toward completing the program of study is unsatisfactory.

If a student receives a final grade of "C" in any CSD graduate courses, the instructor will complete a Student Intervention Plan (SIP) to document the repair procedures, which will identify the areas of focus, plan of action, evaluation procedures, and faculty members involved. The course instructor, in consultation with the student's program of study committee, has the option of requiring the student to retake all or part of the course to address deficiencies as part of an independent study course. If the student does not meet the competency of 80% or higher and again receives a grade of "C" or lower in the subsequent course (full course or independent study course), the student will be dismissed from the graduate program. The student's performance will be documented on the SIP evaluation form and the grade will be submitted to the university.

A student may earn a final grade of "C" in only one academic course and continue in the program, if the student's GPA does not fall below a 3.0 and successfully completes the SIP for that course. A second final course grade of "C" or lower will result in the student's dismissal from the graduate program. Students receiving a "D" or lower final grade in any graduate course will be immediately dismissed from the program.

In addition to the overall course grades, as discussed above, students are also expected to achieve competence levels during the semester of 80% or higher on formative and summative course assignments/activities (e.g., written assignments, projects, presentations, exams, quizzes) within a course to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes. If the student does not demonstrate an adequate level of competence on an assignment/activity per the policy stated in the course materials (e.g., syllabus or standards hanout), the instructor will provide the student repair activities. If not completed successfully, a student intervention plan (SIP) is completed by the course instructor and the student will be required to complete the intervention plan within 6 weeks. If the student does not achieve the competency a second time, the program will determine further course of action. The student's performance will be recorded on the SIP evaluation form.

## **KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS ACQUISITION (KASA)**

Acquisition of appropriate clinical skills is the focus throughout the student's graduate program, and progress in acquiring these skills is evaluated every semester. Qualified graduate students enroll and participate in practicum experiences each semester (students experiencing exceptional circumstances must petition and receive approval by the CSD faculty to be exempt).

Current professional and accreditation standards require that students become knowledgeable and acquire skills in nine major areas of practice, and that these skills extend to assessment, intervention, and personal qualities such as professionalism and ethical conduct. The standards also prescribe competence with clients across the lifespan and from diverse backgrounds. The nine areas are: articulation, fluency, voice and resonance, receptive and expressive language, hearing, swallowing, cognitive aspects of communication, social aspects of communication, and communication modalities.

In each of the nine areas, the student must acquire a basic level of competence such that the student is ready to undertake the Clinical Fellowship experience upon graduation with the master's degree. Consequently, the master's degree will not be awarded until the student has met these requirements. Student progress toward achieving requisite outcomes in academic knowledge, clinical skills, and direct client contact hours is monitored on a semester basis in an information database (i.e., Calipso).

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

### Clinical Hour Requirements

Specific clinical contact hour requirements for the master's degree (M.S.) are in accordance with the guidelines for certification as a speech-language pathologist by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). (Some of these requirements may be obtained at the undergraduate level):

1. 25 clock hours of clinical observation (typically completed prior to practicum enrollment).
2. A minimum of 375 hours of practicum, including 325 hours at the graduate level.
3. Assignments are made to provide clinical experiences with individuals across the life span and with as many types of disorders and differences as possible.

### Practicum in Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology

All students must complete 25 hours of supervised observation of clinical service for speech, language, swallowing, or hearing impairments (typically fulfilled at the undergraduate level). Following the clinical observation experience and the completion of appropriate coursework, students are assigned clients at the KSU Speech and Hearing Center. Graduate students from other institutions must provide evidence of any clinical contact hours signed by their supervisor(s) at the institution where the hours were obtained. Those supervisors must hold the CCC in the appropriate area.

Students must complete a minimum of 100 clinical clock hours at the KSU Speech and Hearing Center, and the first 25 clock hours of direct clinical experience will always be completed there, even if clinical contact hours were obtained earlier at a different training program. When sufficient clinical experience has been completed and competency levels demonstrated, the student may be assigned to an off-campus practicum site. Students are expected to enroll in at least two credit hours of practicum (CSD 705 or 706) during each semester or term (summer) of enrollment. Students complete a minimum of 4 on-campus semesters of practicum prior to externship placements. Clinical contact hours are counted toward the total number required (375) only if the student earns a practicum grade of A or B.

### Externship in Speech-Language Pathology

All students are required by the program to complete two externships at off-campus sites and accrue a minimum of 50 clock hours and appropriate clinical competencies at each site. The Clinic Director and program faculty must approve all external placements. For students hoping to obtain certification from any State Department of Education, it is highly recommended that one of the two externships be in a public-school setting. Clinical contact hours will be counted toward the total number required (375) only if the student earns a grade of A or B in the externship in which the hours were accrued. During the semesters that students are completing externships, they are expected to enroll for a minimum of six credit hours to a maximum of 9 credit hours (CSD 847) unless otherwise approved by the faculty.

The Clinic Director of the program has negotiated contracts with several area schools, hospitals, and rehabilitation centers. All externship supervisors are licensed speech-language pathologists with their certificate of clinical competence. At many of the extern sites, former graduates of the program supervise current KSU graduate students. Students should expect to travel or relocate to the communities where the approved off-campus sites are located. Some current and past sites include:

- Public Schools of Manhattan, Salina, Topeka, Kansas City and others
- St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center (Topeka)
- Stormont-Vail Hospital (Topeka)
- Geary Community Hospital (Junction City)
- Mercy Regional Health Center (Manhattan)
- Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City
- Saint Luke's South Hospital (Kansas City)
- Meadowbrook Rehabilitation Hospital (Gardner)
- Children's Mercy Hospital (Kansas City)
- Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital (Topeka)
- Veterans Administration Hospitals (Kansas City or Topeka)
- Salina Regional Health Center (Salina)
- Newton Medical Center (Newton)
- Central Kansas Speech Services (McPherson)

Graduate students are expected not to hold daytime jobs during their externships. Graduate students do not hold a GTA during their externship.

## OUTREACH & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate students are encouraged to join the Kansas State Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA), the pre-professional organization for students interested in the study of communication sciences and disorders. The student organization meets monthly and is involved in several service and philanthropic activities throughout the year. Graduate students who belong to NSSLHA for the last two years of their graduate program can receive a discount when applying for certification ([NSSLHA to ASHA Conversion Discount](#)).

Learn more about community outreach and engagement activities, including a [support group for stuttering](#) led by CSD faculty with the assistance of graduate students.

## FACULTY BACKGROUNDS AND INTERESTS

### **Jane Mertz Garcia, Ph.D., Professor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. degree from Kansas State University, M.S. degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Ph.D. from the University of South Alabama
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and LSVT certification
- Areas of interest and specialty:
  - Dysphagia
  - Motor speech disorders/AAC
  - Acquired language disorders & cognitive disorders in adults
- E-mail: [jgarcia@ksu.edu](mailto:jgarcia@ksu.edu)

**Robert G. Garcia, Au.D., M.B.A., CSD Program Chairperson, Clinical Audiology Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, M.B.A. from University of South Alabama, and Doctor of Audiology from A.T. Still University of Health Sciences, Arizona School of Health Sciences
- CCC in Audiology
- Areas of interest and specialty:
  - Clinical audiology
  - Database management
  - Business management
- E-mail: [rgarcia@ksu.edu](mailto:rgarcia@ksu.edu)

**Melanie Hilgers, M.S., Clinical Associate Professor, Clinic Director, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from Fort Hays State University
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and LSVT certification
- Areas of interest and specialty:
  - Communication development and disorders associated with preschool and school-aged children
  - Central auditory processing disorder
  - Clinical instruction
- E-mail: [mhilgers@ksu.edu](mailto:mhilgers@ksu.edu)

**DeAnna R. McCloud, M.S., Teaching Assistant Professor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from Kansas State University
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and LSVT certification
- Areas of interest:
  - Communication development and disorders associated with infants, toddlers, and school aged children
  - Primary coaching model
  - Teletherapy with school aged children
  - Clinical instruction
- Email: [mccloud2@ksu.edu](mailto:mccloud2@ksu.edu)

**Taylor Nading, M.S., Instructor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from Kansas State University
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and Lessac-Madsen Resonant Voice Therapy Certification
- Areas of interest and specialty:
  - Social communication across the lifespan
  - Early Intervention and school-age speech and language disorders
  - Childhood apraxia of speech
  - Fluency disorders
  - Clinical instruction
- E-mail: [tlrush@ksu.edu](mailto:tlrush@ksu.edu)

**Jeridy Oetken, SLP.D., M.B.A., Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from Fort Hays State University, M.B.A from Kansas Wesleyan University, and Doctorate of Speech-Language Pathology from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and LSVT certification
- Areas of interest:
  - Communication development and disorders with preschool and school-aged children
  - Acquired communication disorders in children and adults
  - Swallowing and voice disorders
  - Clinical instruction
  - Business Administration and skilled documentation for Speech-Language Pathology
- E-mail: [jeridy@ksu.edu](mailto:jeridy@ksu.edu)

**Kristin M. Pelczarski, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Graduate Faculty, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.A. degree from The George Washington University, M.A., and Ph.D. from University of Pittsburgh
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology and LSVT certification
- Areas of Interest and Specialty:
  - Stuttering and fluency disorders across the lifespan
  - Phonological awareness and phonological processing
  - Clinical research
- E-mail: [kpelczar@ksu.edu](mailto:kpelczar@ksu.edu)

**David Rehfeld, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.A. & M.S. in Communication Sciences & Disorders from Baylor University, M.Ed. in Special Education from Texas Tech University, and Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Baylor University
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology, LSVT, and Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Areas of Interest and Specialty:
  - Complex communication needs
  - School-age language disorders
  - Scholarship of teaching and learning and Interprofessional Education
- E-mail: [drehfeld@ksu.edu](mailto:drehfeld@ksu.edu)

**Danielle Schwartz, M.S., Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Speech-Language Supervisor**

- B.S. and M.S. degrees from Kansas State University
- CCC in Speech-Language Pathology, LSVT and Lessac-Madsen Resonant Voice Therapy Certifications
- Areas of interest and specialty:
  - Voice for Communication
  - Voice disorders
  - Fluency disorders
  - Private practice
  - Clinical instruction
- E-mail: [dschwartz@ksu.edu](mailto:dschwartz@ksu.edu)

## ADVISOR (Major Professor)

A graduate faculty member is assigned as an advisor and mentor (known as “major professor”) to each student at the time he or she enters the graduate program. Students may choose to change advisors and may do so by obtaining the approval of the new advisor and by informing the original advisor of the change. Students must report to their advisors to determine the requirements necessary for graduation and certification. The advisor must approve enrollment for each student every semester. Any changes in enrollment must be approved by the advisor and recorded in the student’s file. A program of study should be approved and filed in the Graduate School for each graduate student before the end of the second semester for full-time students. A committee of three or four graduate faculty members will supervise the program of study for each graduate student.

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

Kansas State University administers an extensive financial aid program. Detailed information concerning financial aid is available upon request from the Office of Student Financial Assistance or students may apply on the Internet at [Office of Student Financial Assistance \(k-state.edu\)](http://Office of Student Financial Assistance (k-state.edu)). The program also administers three Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) and part-time research assistantships (the number varies related to funding opportunities). In addition, CSD graduate students are competitive for GTA and GA positions through other campus programs and departments such as the office of Student Success. Students are awarded stipends based on merit. Students interested in a graduate assistantship must complete relevant documentation as part of the graduate application process.

Graduate students have access to multiple types of resources. The Graduate School also offers a comprehensive section on ["Graduate Student Life,"](#) which includes resources for student success (e.g., writing workshops) and achieving work-life balance (e.g., health and wellness) as examples.

## MASTER’S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

As they approach completion of the master’s degree, students are expected to be aware of, and to follow Graduate School deadlines. For example, before taking master’s Comprehensive Examinations, the student must file a request-for-examination form with the Graduate School.

## Non-Thesis Option

Graduate students are required to pass a comprehensive examination to graduate. The expectation of CSD faculty is that graduate students start preparing and studying for their comprehensive examination during their first externship to be adequately prepared. The comprehensive examination is taken midway through a student’s final semester of enrollment (second externship) to meet university timelines for graduation.

The format of the comprehensive examination is multiple choice covering all the major areas of study in speech-language pathology/audiology. The comprehensive examination encompasses CSD required undergraduate and graduate coursework, which represents 23 Content Assessments. The online

comprehensive examination is taken without notes. It is taken in-person at Campus Creek Complex (about 2 ½ hour examination).

A passing score on the comprehensive examination shows a student's overall competency and breadth of knowledge across Content Assessments. A passing score on the comprehensive examination is based on a student achieving both of the following standards:

1. A Total Score that represents 70% or higher accuracy. Accordingly, a student who has total accuracy of 69% or lower is required to retake the examination.
2. 70% or higher competency across content from CSD undergraduate/graduate courses. Passing a Content Assessment means that a student answered more than 50% of the questions accurately. Accordingly, a student who misses 50% or more questions from 8 or more Content Assessments is required to retake the examination.

If a second examination is indicated, it is routinely scheduled one to two weeks later. The same test procedures apply. The same criteria apply for determining a pass (i.e., 70% or higher Total Score accuracy and 70% or higher accuracy across Content Assessments).

If a student does not pass the second examination, they must complete substantial repair in content areas of concern. The follow-up will be specific to the Content Assessments in which the student missed 50% or more questions. The specific repair questions will be determined by faculty who oversees relevant coursework.

After successful completion of the comprehensive examination, a student's program of study committee formally designates a "pass" to the K-State Graduate School. A negative vote by half or more of the graduate faculty on the program of study committee is considered a failure. For example, a "failure" may be indicated if a student fails both examination attempts and fails to successfully repair Content Assessments after the second examination. The student will be dismissed from the program.

## Thesis Option

A graduate student choosing the thesis option completes an original research project instead of the written comprehensive examination. The student should declare his or her interest in the thesis option as soon as possible following acceptance into the graduate program. A minimum of three graduate faculty members will comprise the thesis committee (i.e., major professor and at least two other graduate faculty members). A minimum of two graduate faculty members from the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program will supervise the research project. One faculty member from the program will serve as thesis advisor and committee chair. One committee member should be selected from another unit in the Department of Applied Human Sciences or another department in the University. The candidate selects all committee members, including the thesis advisor. Committee members will serve at their own discretion and availability.

The student will present the thesis topic to his or her supervisory committee at a pre-proposal meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to present the proposed topic for approval and suggestions prior to writing the proposal. A written prospectus of the thesis project (first three chapters) should be given to committee members at least two weeks prior to the presentation of the proposal. The prospectus should include an introduction, appropriate review of literature, a statement of problems, and the

proposed methods (please refer to AHS guidelines for additional information). The student's supervisory committee must, as a group, approve the protocol for the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data collection cannot occur until approval is obtained through the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects.

Following the approval of the prospectus and the completion of the research project, the student must obtain written permission to have the final oral examination. This examination is an oral defense of the original research project. Copies of the thesis should be distributed to each committee member a minimum of two weeks prior to the final oral exam. During that time, the committee may suggest clarification and/or revisions. A final draft of the thesis should be presented to the committee for examination at the oral exam. The committee may require further revisions at that time.

## QUESTIONS

Specific questions about procedures, deadlines, and forms may be addressed to LaNasia Cottner (Administrative Assistant) at 785-532-6879. Questions about the graduate program and curriculum should be addressed to the Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Jane Garcia, at the same number. Information about the CSD graduate program is also available online:  
<https://www.hhs.k-state.edu/ahs/academics/graduate/communication-sciences-disorders/>

## SPECIAL NOTES

Information concerning academic grievances and grievances against faculty can be found online at:  
[Graduate Student Rights and Grievances Procedures \(k-state.edu\)](#)

Program complaints or grievances can be forwarded to the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Details are available online at:  
[Complaints \(asha.org\)](#)