# M.A. Communication Sciences & Disorders

# GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

# 2026-2027

Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders

umaine.edu/comscidis/

**Orono, Maine**

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## SECTION A: Overview

Welcome to our graduate program! We hope your time with us will be stimulating, and yield growth and change. We are here to facilitate learning and look forward to working with you. We expect you to be responsible for yourself and your own learning. As with any endeavor, you will get from this experience what you invest in it.

This handbook is intended for first-year students entering the graduate program in 2026 who are expected to complete the program and seek ASHA certification under the 2027 standards (2020 or 2027, depending on their individual application timeline).

You are responsible for the rules and policies of the Graduate School and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD). We expect you to read this handbook and follow the stated rules and policies, which affect your progress toward the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in CSD. This handbook is a resource that you will need throughout your program.

Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator with questions regarding this handbook or any other aspects of the graduate program.

### Program Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the program the graduate will be able to:

- Develop, critically interpret, and deliver evidence-based evaluation and treatment practices for communication and swallowing disorders in individuals across the lifespan with diverse backgrounds and needs required of an entry-level clinician.
- Use appropriate professional oral and written communication with diverse individuals.
- Demonstrate accountability, integrity, professionalism, and cultural responsiveness in alignment with the ASHA Code of Ethics.
- Develop a plan for growth in clinical knowledge and skills following independent, systematic self-reflections and critical analysis to demonstrate lifelong learning in support of evidence-based practice.

## SECTION B: Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

The M.A. degree in CSD (thesis or non-thesis) strives to provide students with the competencies necessary for the delivery of high-quality Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) services. The program places emphasis on the preparation of beginning clinicians for independent professional activities associated with family-centered, community wide services in various settings of northern New England. This mandate is in keeping with the mission of the University of Maine, the land, sea, and space grant university of the State of Maine.

The M.A. program in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Maine is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), 2200 Research Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 800-498-2071 or 301-296-5700.

Our full-time graduate program extends over a 5-semester period starting each fall semester. *A summary of the graduation requirements* that are detailed in this handbook include:

- Earning a grade of at least a B- or better for all courses and clinical practicum
- Passing the preliminary examination
- Passing the comprehensive examination
- Successful completion of 400 clinical clock hours and required associated activities (e.g., Graduate Student Professional Series)

As part of the M.A. degree, students are required to complete all of the academic and clinical practicum requirements for eligibility for the national Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP). It is essential that you review the 2027 ASHA Standards and Implementation Procedures for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP). The CSD program maintains the highest standards for academic and clinical teaching with a model that supports student learning and meets both State of Maine licensure and ASHA CCC standards.

The graduate program requires prerequisite coursework in audiology, language development, speech anatomy and physiology, phonetics, speech science, and neuroscience. This coursework might be addressed in a standalone course or embedded throughout courses. These courses may be completed before or during the first year of the Graduate Program. When included as part of the Graduate Program, the background coursework can extend the length of the program by 1-2 semesters, but some prerequisites can be taken concurrently with a traditional program of study. Prospective applicants should contact the Graduate Program Coordinator with questions while current students should speak with their advisor. ASHA also requires that students have background undergraduate coursework in biological sciences, physical sciences, behavioral sciences, and statistics/research methods. These courses cannot be related to communication sciences and disorders. Additional information is available on the ASHA website about the non-CSD prerequisites.

Prior to the start of the graduate program, students must complete online trainings and participate in New Graduate Student Orientation (August).

## Academic Requirements

The following curriculum constitutes the requirements of the M.A. degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. This program is designed to provide graduate students with the academic, clinical, and research education consistent with the 2027 ASHA Standards for Clinical Certification in SLP. The curriculum consists of a core 60 academic credit hours with an additional 6 academic credit hours of either a thesis or non-thesis option (see Section D for details on thesis and non-thesis options).

**Courses** (45 credit hours total, 3 credit hours each)
CSD 581: Articulation and Phonology Disorders
CSD 582: Voice Disorders
CSD 583: Fluency Disorders
CSD 584: Language Disorders in Children: Preschool
CSD 585: Language Disorders in Children: School-Age
CSD 588: Audiologic Rehabilitation
CSD 601: Seminar in Research Methods
CSD 680: Augmentative and Alternative Communication
CSD 682: Current Issues in Aphasia, RHD and Dementia
CSD 683: Seminar in Clinical Procedures I
CSD 684: Seminar in Clinical Procedures II
CSD 685: Diagnostic Process in Speech-Language Pathology
CSD 687: Swallowing Disorders
CSD 688: Neurocognitive Disorders in Adults
CSD 689: Motor Speech Disorders

**Clinical Practicum** (15 credit hours total, 3 credit hours enrollment each semester)
CSD 686: Clinical Practicum

**Thesis** (CSD 699 and INT 601) OR **Non-Thesis** option (elective coursework) (6 credit hours total)

**66 Total Semester Credit Hours in M.A. Program**

## Clinical Education Requirements

### Clinical Education Overview

**Clinical education is an integral and sequential component of the graduate program in speech-language pathology.** Clinical experiences are designed to integrate academic knowledge with supervised practice, develop the knowledge, skills, professional judgment, and independence required for entry-level practice, and provide the breadth of supervised experience required for professional credentialing. Students participate in clinical education at the Madelyn E. and Albert D. Conley Speech, Language, and Hearing Center (CSLHC) and at approved external sites. Clinical procedures specific to the CSLHC are outlined in the CSLHC Operational Manual. As student clinicians, students represent the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD), the University of Maine, and the profession and are expected to meet program, university, site, legal, and ethical requirements throughout all clinical experiences.

**Accreditation.** The University of Maine graduate program in speech-language pathology was re-accredited in 2022 by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) and is currently accredited through 2030. Clinical education is planned and monitored in accordance with applicable CAA accreditation standards and ASHA certification standards.

### Professional and Accreditation Standards

2027 ASHA Standards and Implementation Procedures for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP): ASHA 2027 CCC-SLP Standards

2027 CAA Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology: CAA Standards for Accreditation

### Clinical Practicum Requirements and Sequence

The clinical educational experiences are organized, sequenced and integrated to support progressive development from closely supported clinical learning toward increasing independence. Clinical assignments are matched to each student's current knowledge and skill level, prior clinical performance, educational needs, and readiness for the population and setting. Students are assigned to a practicum only after they have acquired an appropriate knowledge base for that experience.

- Graduate students complete five semesters of clinical practicum. Students typically register for three credits of CSD 686 Clinical Practicum each semester of practicum.
- Additional one-credit CSD 686 clinical experiences may be offered in areas such as audiology or advanced swallowing. Availability, timing, and eligibility are determined by the program. These enrollments may count toward the 6 credits of elective coursework required in the non-thesis track.
- Students must complete the required Clinical Orientation before beginning graduate clinical practicum.
- University of Maine program requirement: students must have completed 25 hours of guided clinical observation before beginning direct clinical practicum. Observation

hours must be documented and approved through the program's clinical tracking system. These hours will count toward the 400-hour total once approved in Typhon. Students who enter without the required observation hours will be provided an approved method for completing them.
- The first two practicum placements (Fall 1 and Spring 1) are typically completed at the CSLHC under CSD faculty supervision. Students work with clients across the lifespan and with varied communication and swallowing needs.
- During the third practicum, typically in the summer, students may remain at the CSLHC or begin an approved external placement based on readiness, clinical education needs, and placement availability.
- During the second year, students complete external clinical experiences that provide meaningful exposure to both pediatric and adult populations and to different service-delivery settings. Specific placement sequences are determined individually so that students can meet program and professional competency requirements.
- Students are expected to progress toward greater independence across the clinical sequence. The amount and type of supervision are adjusted to the student's level of development, the complexity of the clinical activity, and the needs and welfare of the individual receiving services.

**Clinical practicum is graded.** Semester-specific performance expectations and grading criteria are published in the CSD 686 syllabus for each practicum level. Policies concerning incomplete or non-final grades are governed by University and program requirements and should be reviewed in the applicable syllabus, this handbook, and the UMaine Graduate Catalog.

## Clinical Assignments and Placements

### General Assignment Principles

Clinical assignments are made by the Coordinator of Clinical Training in collaboration with clinical faculty/supervisors and, when applicable, external site personnel. Assignments are educational decisions and are based on multiple factors, including:

- the student's current clinical knowledge, skills, performance, and readiness;
- clinical hour and experience needs, including age-span and setting requirements;
- student training interests and placement requests;
- recommendations and input from current clinical supervisors;
- client needs, preferences, and continuity of care;
- site requirements and the appropriateness of the site population for the student's educational needs;
- availability of qualified supervision;
- student, client, supervisor, and site schedules; and
- availability of appropriate clinical placements.

Student preferences are considered but cannot be guaranteed. Students must provide the availability requested by the program each semester, maintain reliable transportation to and from clinical placements, and be prepared for placement schedules that may differ from the University academic calendar. Some external placements, particularly medical settings, may require participation on multiple days each week and may require travel of up to approximately one hour.

**On-Campus Clinical Assignments**
Beginning clinicians are ordinarily assigned to the CSLHC. Students receive their assigned client(s), supervisor(s), schedule, and start date and are expected to contact the assigned supervisor promptly and follow clinic procedures for preparation, scheduling, documentation, and communication. Students may not independently change clinical schedules, rooms, service plans, or client communication arrangements without appropriate supervisor authorization.

**External Clinical Placements**
External clinical education is an important component of the graduate program. The CSD program maintains relationships with a range of approved external facilities and may develop additional sites when needed to meet student educational goals.

**Student role in placement selection**
During the first year, students meet with the Coordinator of Clinical Training to review clinical progress, remaining experience needs, interests, scheduling considerations, and possible external placements. Students submit placement preferences through the program's clinical request and schedule process. Placement requests are considered as one factor in the placement decision; final placement decisions are made by the program. A student must be approved as ready for an external placement by the current clinical supervisor and/or the Coordinator of Clinical Training before an external assignment is finalized.

**Site selection and approval**
Before students are placed, the program determines that the external site can provide an appropriate clinical education experience. The review includes the clinical population, available learning opportunities, personnel and supervision, setting expectations, student safety and client welfare, and the site's ability to support the student's educational objectives. New sites are reviewed by the Coordinator of Clinical Training and may include consultation with site administrators, review of site requirements, and a site visit when appropriate.

**Clinical training agreements**
A valid written or electronic clinical training agreement must be in place between the University and the external facility before a student begins a placement. Agreements are processed through applicable University and site procedures.

**Placement readiness and onboarding**
Students must complete all placement-specific requirements before beginning at an external site. These may include background checks, immunization or health documentation, CPR certification, infection-control or blood-borne pathogen training, orientation, technology or documentation training, and other facility requirements.

**Monitoring external placements**
External clinical education is monitored by the program to verify that the placement continues to meet student learning objectives and client welfare requirements. Monitoring includes regular communication as needed, review of student clinical performance, mid-semester and final evaluations, review of clinical hours and experiences, and student feedback regarding the supervisor and placement site. When concerns arise, the Coordinator of Clinical Training works with the student and extern supervisor to clarify expectations, develop additional supports or a documented plan when appropriate, and determine whether the placement should continue or an alternative placement is needed.

## Diagnostic Clinic

All students participate in a concentrated diagnostic assessment experience during the second year through CSD 685 *Diagnostic Process in Speech-Language Pathology*. This experience provides structured practice in clinical assessment and diagnostic decision making, often through team-based evaluations. Most evaluations occur through the CSLHC, with additional community-based opportunities when available. Detailed expectations, schedules, and procedures are provided when students enroll in CSD 685.

## Clinical Hour Requirements, Counting, and Documentation

**ASHA 2027 Clinical Practicum Requirements**
Under the 2027 ASHA CCC-SLP Standards, students must complete a minimum of 400 clock hours of supervised clinical practicum in speech-language pathology. The following requirements apply:

- At least 325 of the 400 hours must be completed while the student is enrolled in graduate study in a CAA-accredited speech-language pathology program.
- At least 250 hours must be graduate-level, on-site, in-person direct contact. For these hours, the graduate student, the individual receiving services, and the graduate clinical educator must be in the same location during the clinical session.
- Up to 150 of the 400 required hours may be earned through ASHA-permitted optional practicum activities, subject to the maximums below and to University of Maine program approval.
- Supervised clinical practicum must include assessment and intervention experiences across the lifespan, with individuals from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and with individuals who have varied types and severities of communication and/or related disorders, differences, and disabilities.
- Clinical experiences must provide breadth across different work settings and populations and support development of entry-level clinical knowledge, skills, judgment, and independence.

| ASHA-Permitted Optional Supervised Activity | Maximum Toward the 400 Hours |
|---|---|
| Non-clinical care management | Up to 50 hours |
| Guided clinical observation | Up to 25 hours |
| Undergraduate on-site, in-person direct-contact practicum | Up to 50 hours |
| Clinical simulation | Up to 75 hours |
| Telepractice | Up to 125 hours |

***Important:*** *These are category maximums, not separate requirements. The student must still meet the 400-hour total, the 325 graduate-hour minimum, and the 250-hour minimum for graduate-level, on-site, in-person, direct-contact.*

**University of Maine CSD Breadth Requirements**

In addition to the ASHA requirements, the University of Maine CSD program requires each student to complete:

- a minimum of 35 clinical hours with young children, birth through 5 years;
- a minimum of 35 clinical hours with school-age children, 6 through 17 years;
- a minimum of 35 clinical hours with adults, 18 years through geriatric populations; and
- a minimum of 50 clinical hours across three different practice settings.

**Knowledge and Skill Areas**

Students must demonstrate clinical skills across the nine major areas identified in the 2027 ASHA standards:

- speech sound production, including articulation, motor planning and execution, phonology, and accent services;
- stuttering, cluttering, and fluency;
- voice and resonance, including respiration, phonation, and upper airway;
- receptive and expressive language and literacy;
- hearing and its impact on speech, language, and communication;
- swallowing and feeding;
- cognition and cognitive aspects of communication;
- social aspects of communication; and
- augmentative and alternative communication modalities.

ASHA does not require a specified number of direct-contact hours in each of these nine areas. Skills may be demonstrated through direct clinical contact, laboratories, clinical simulations, practical examinations, and independent projects as determined by the graduate program. Direct clinical experiences are planned to provide sufficient breadth and depth across populations, settings, assessment, and intervention.

**Counting Clinical Practicum Hours**

- Only actual time spent in an eligible supervised clinical practicum activity may be counted. Clinical time may not be rounded up to the nearest 15-minute interval.
- Direct contact includes eligible evaluation, treatment/intervention, prevention, or counseling completed in the presence of the individual receiving services and/or care partner(s).

- Up to two graduate student clinicians may actively participate in the same clinical session and each may count the full session when both are actively participating in the provision of clinical services.
- At the program's discretion, up to 50 hours of non-clinical care management may count when the activity is associated with clinical services the student clinician provided. Examples include documentation, report writing, test scoring with interpretation, chart review, interprofessional care conferences, and programming AAC devices.
- Clinical simulation hours may count only for the time the student is actively engaged in the simulated clinical case. Simulations must include learning outcomes, pre-brief/debrief, meaningful real-world replacement, clinical-educator debrief and assessment of learning outcomes in order to be approved by UMaine/ASHA. Debriefing time is required as part of a qualifying simulation experience but is not itself counted as simulation clock hours. Asynchronous clinical simulation supervision must include debriefing commensurate with at least 25% of the clock hours for each case.
- Guided observation may count only when it meets ASHA requirements, including a guided debrief with a qualified clinical educator. Debrief that occurs after the observation is not added to the observation clock-hour total.
- General preparation, studying, activity preparation, routine supervisor conferences, and other activities that do not meet ASHA definitions for direct contact or approved non-clinical care management may not be counted as clinical practicum clock hours.
- When a clinical session addresses more than one communication or swallowing area, hours should be documented in Typhon in a manner that accurately reflects the clinical services provided and current program documentation procedures.

**Typhon: Clinical Hour and Experience Documentation**

Typhon is the program's clinical tracking system. Students are responsible for maintaining timely, complete, and accurate documentation of their supervised clinical experiences throughout the graduate program. Students receive Typhon training at the beginning of the program.

- Clinical hours must be entered in Typhon within one week of the clinical experience and submitted to the appropriate supervisor for verification and approval.
- Students must document the information required by the program, including the amount and type of clinical activity, client age group, clinical area(s), service type, setting, and other required demographic or experience information.
- Students should link client cases and add client initials in the note section.
- Students should monitor their accumulated hours and breadth of experience throughout the program and review progress with the Coordinator of Clinical Training as needed.
- Students complete a practicum narrative in Typhon at the end of each practicum placement.
- The program reviews and verifies clinical records as part of documenting student progress toward graduation and professional credentialing requirements.

## Clinical Supervision

Supervision is a collaborative teaching process intended to protect client welfare while supporting the student's development of clinical competence, professional judgment, self-evaluation, and increasing independence. The amount and type of supervision may vary by student, client, setting, and clinical activity.

### Amount and Type of Supervision

- Under the 2027 ASHA standards, direct supervision must include at least 25% of the student clinician's total contact with each individual receiving services.
- The 25% level is a minimum. Supervision must be provided throughout the practicum, must be commensurate with the student clinician's knowledge, skills, and experience, and must be sufficient to ensure the welfare of the individual receiving services.
- Direct supervision must occur in real time. For on-site, in-person services, a qualified clinical educator must be available and on site to consult with the student. For telepractice, the clinical educator must be available virtually or in person.
- At the UMaine CSLHC:
  - Students are generally observed directly by their supervisor 100% of the time initially, with a goal of increased independence.
  - For clients whose services are billed to MaineCare, payer procedures require 100% direct supervision of student-provided clinical services.
  - Supervision may be increased at any time based on client needs, clinical complexity, student performance, site requirements, payer requirements, or supervisor judgment.

### Clinical Educator Qualifications

Clinical practicum hours used toward ASHA certification must be supervised by a clinical educator who meets ASHA requirements prior to and throughout the supervisory experience. The clinical educator must:

- hold current ASHA certification in the appropriate profession;
- have at least nine months of full-time clinical experience, or the part-time equivalent, after earning ASHA certification; and
- have completed at least two hours of professional development in clinical instruction, supervision, and/or mentorship after earning ASHA certification and before supervising a student.

Clinical educators must also meet applicable state licensure requirements and any additional University or placement-site requirements. The CSD program verifies required credentials and qualifications for supervisors before student clinical hours are approved for the placement.

## Student Responsibilities in Clinical Education

### Professional and Ethical Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate the highest level of academic and clinical integrity and to follow the ASHA Code of Ethics, University policies, and site-specific professional and legal requirements. Students are expected to provide person- and family-centered care by respecting the goals, values, preferences, communication

needs, and circumstances of individuals and families and by participating appropriately in collaborative clinical decision making. Students may find information on procedures for addressing violations in the University of Maine System's Academic Integrity Policy.

**ASHA Code of Ethics:** ASHA Code of Ethics

**Confidentiality and Privacy**
All client, patient, student, and clinical information must be treated as confidential. Students may access, use, discuss, record, store, or transmit protected or identifying information only as authorized for legitimate educational and clinical purposes and only through approved University or placement-site systems. Identifying information may not be removed from a clinical site or shared through personal devices, personal email, social media, or other unauthorized methods. Students may not store client identifying or demographic information on personal computers, personal devices, removable drives or other unapproved systems. Clinical discussions must occur only with authorized individuals and in private settings. Appropriate authorization or release of information must be obtained before information is exchanged, recorded, or disclosed when required. Students must comply with HIPAA, FERPA, University policy, and site-specific privacy requirements as applicable.

**Attendance, Communication, Safety, and Site Requirements**
- Students are expected to attend all assigned clinical activities and to follow the attendance requirements stated in the applicable practicum syllabus and placement-site procedures.
- If an absence or emergency occurs, the student must notify the clinical supervisor immediately and notify the Coordinator of Clinical Training when the absence affects multiple sessions, the placement schedule, or the student's ability to meet practicum requirements.
- Students must follow supervisor and site procedures for communication with clients, families, care partners, and other professionals. Students should not contact clients independently unless authorized to do so.
- Students must complete and follow required training and procedures related to infection prevention, universal precautions, safety, emergency procedures, and other clinical risk-management requirements.
- Students are responsible for understanding and following site-specific schedules, documentation practices, orientation requirements, dress expectations, and professional conduct policies.

**Student Evaluation, Progression, and Grading**
Student clinical performance is evaluated formally at mid-semester and at the end of each practicum. Feedback is ongoing throughout the semester, and supervisory support is adjusted as the student develops. Across the graduate program, student progress is assessed by multiple academic and clinical faculty/supervisors using formative and summative methods.

The Practicum Evaluation includes the following areas:

- Personal and Professional Competencies
- Foundation Knowledge
- Evaluation Skills
- Intervention Skills
- Oral Communication Skills
- Written Communication Skills

Clinical performance is rated on a 1–5 scale that considers both effectiveness and the level of supervisory support required for successful performance. Students are expected to demonstrate increasing independence as they progress through the clinical sequence; however, appropriate guidance with a new population, setting, client, or clinical skill is part of the learning process.

Students complete self-evaluations at the mid-semester and final evaluation points and review their ratings with the supervisor. Students also complete supervisory evaluations to provide feedback regarding the clinical teaching experience. Current forms and evaluation procedures are maintained in Typhon and/or the applicable CSD 686 course materials.

**Grading**

Semester-specific grading standards, including the expected level of independence for each practicum, are published in the applicable CSD 686 syllabus. The instructor of record determines the final course grade based on the student's overall clinical performance and the semester-specific grading criteria. External supervisors provide evaluative input and a recommended grade when they are not the instructor of record.

**Clinical concerns and support**

If a student is not meeting expected clinical performance, professional conduct, or client-welfare requirements, concerns are addressed promptly through supervisory feedback and the program's written student-support/intervention policies and procedures (i.e., Remediation Policy and Policy on Graduate Students at Academic Risk, located in Section C). The student, supervisor, and appropriate program administrator may develop documented goals or additional supports. Placement continuation or modification is determined based on student learning needs, program requirements, and client welfare.

## Professional Credentialing

The University of Maine CSD graduate program is designed to prepare students to meet the academic and clinical education requirements for the graduate degree, future ASHA certification (CCC-SLP), and professional licensure in Maine. Requirements for professional credentials are established by external credentialing and licensing bodies and may change.

ASHA certification requires completion of the qualifying graduate degree and required knowledge and skills, completion of the supervised clinical practicum requirements described in this section, successful completion of the national examination adopted by ASHA, and completion of the post-graduate Clinical Fellowship. Students should use

ASHA's current certification information as the authoritative source for certification procedures and timelines.

**ASHA certification information:** ASHA Certification
Students who plan to seek licensure or another professional credential outside Maine should review the requirements of the relevant jurisdiction early in the graduate program and discuss any additional clinical education needs with the Coordinator of Clinical Training. The program will make reasonable efforts to support students in meeting additional jurisdictional requirements when feasible but cannot guarantee that all requirements of every state, province, territory, or external credentialing body can be met within the standard program sequence.

**Students planning to practice in Canada**
Students should review current national and provincial certification/licensure requirements and maintain any additional records required by those authorities. The program will make reasonable efforts to support identified Canadian clinical education requirements when feasible but does not guarantee that all Canadian or provincial requirements can be met (https://www.sac-oac.ca/).

## Graduate Student Professional Series

During the final semester of the graduate program, students will be required to attend a seminar series that focuses on professional issues in SLP. These presentations typically take place on several evenings during January and February. Following each presentation, students will complete a questionnaire and return it to the series instructor, to be included in the student's file.

## Advisory Committee

Upon entering the graduate program, students will be assigned an advisory committee to support them throughout their program. The committee includes a major advisor (the Graduate Program Coordinator), the Coordinator of Clinical Training, and the Department Chair. Students work with these faculty members (primarily with the major advisor) in developing a program of study. **All students must complete a Program of Study Form prior to the end of the first semester of graduate study**. It must be approved, signed by the advisory committee and forwarded to the Graduate School. A copy of the approved form will be included in the student's file. This form is extremely important because it represents a "contract" between the Department and the student. Changes in the program of study must be approved by the advisory committee and submitted in writing to the Graduate School. Thesis students should refer to the section on completing a thesis.

Should a student desire a change in advisor, they should email a written request to the Advisory Committee.

## SECTION C: Policies

### Courses taken at other Colleges/Universities

1. First-semester students may transfer no more than 6 credits toward a graduate degree if the course:
    - Was not used to satisfy undergraduate degree requirements
    - Was equivalent to a course required for their graduate degree
    - Was completed with a grade of B- or higher
    - Is approved by the Advisory Committee
    - Was completed within 6 years of beginning the graduate program

2. Currently enrolled students may take courses outside of the University of Maine System if:
    - Approved by the Advisory Committee and Graduate Dean ahead of time
    - Such courses constitute no more than half of the courses listed on a student's Program of Study form.

### Full-Time Study

All students are required to maintain continuous enrollment. This is the policy of both the Department of CSD and the Graduate School. At this time, we do not accept part-time students unless a full-time student currently enrolled in the program obtains written approval to modify their program of study to part-time (see below).

Full-Time

1. Full-time students are required to continuously enroll for a minimum of 6 credits per semester until the completion of the degree requirements. Full-time students who do not enroll for at least 6 credits each semester must request a leave of absence for the time of non- or reduced enrollment, and must request readmission prior to registering for courses again.
2. Full-time students wishing to change their status to part-time must file a written request and obtain approval from their Advisory Committee.

### Availability of Faculty and Courses in the Summer

The University offers the opportunity to pursue graduate studies during the summer. Although some graduate-level courses are offered during the summer session, the University does not guarantee that any particular course will be offered.

The availability of individual faculty to advise, supervise research, or participate in final oral examinations varies, and is determined by the individual. Do not assume faculty will be available during the summer. Students should determine, in advance, whether the members of their Advisory Committee will be available.

## Student Files

Student files are kept digitally in a GSuite for Education Google Drive. Files contain only records of official university or departmental business: application materials, admission and appointment letters, Program of Study forms, transcripts, and any official Advisory Committee or Graduate Program Coordinator action. Students will have ongoing view-only access to their folders while enrolled in the program via their UMaine email account. Students are encouraged to review their files periodically to ensure that all materials are up-to-date.

## Eligibility Requirements and Core Functions

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the practice of speech-language pathology to function in a broad variety of clinical situations, and to render a wide spectrum of patient care, individuals must have skills and attributes in five areas: communication, motor, intellectual-cognitive, sensory-observational, and behavioral-social, as referred to by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2023). These skills enable a student to meet graduate and professional requirements as measured by state licensure and national certification. Many of these skills can be learned and developed during the course of the graduate program through coursework and clinical experience. Students accepting our offer of admission as well as students in the University of Maine graduate program in Communication Sciences and Disorders are expected to demonstrate these core functions with or without reasonable accommodations to successfully complete program requirements. Students who believe they may require accommodations to meet the core skill requirements due to a disability should contact Student Accessibility Services, located at the Center for Accessibility and Volunteer Engagement at the UCU, 139 Rangeley Rd, um.sas@maine.edu, 207-581-2319. At the start of the graduate program or the beginning of clinical practicum, students will certify that they are able to meet the standards with or without accommodations. A student's ability to successfully meet and maintain these technical standards with reasonable accommodations (as determined in consultation with SAS) or without accommodations is necessary to complete program requirements. A student who cannot meet these standards may be unable to satisfy the criteria for graduation.

## Accommodations, Nondiscrimination, Sexual Harassment, Equal Opportunity

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders supports and adheres to University of Maine System policies regarding accommodations, sexual harassment, and equal opportunity. These policies are stated in the Graduate Catalog, and students are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (Center for Accessibility and Volunteer Engagement at the UCU, 139 Rangeley Rd, um.sas@maine.edu, 207-581-2319) or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Services (5713 Chadbourne Hall, Room 412, equal.opportunity@maine.edu, 207-581-1226 (voice), TTY 711 (Maine Relay System)) if they have questions or concerns regarding these policies and procedures.

The nondiscrimination policy of the University is as follows.

In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and pursuing its own goals of diversity, the University of Maine System does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, familial status, ancestry, age, disability physical or mental, genetic information, or veterans or military status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Director of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Services, 5713 Chadbourne Hall, Room 412, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469-5713, 207.581.1226, TTY 711 (Maine Relay System).

## Incomplete Grade Policy

The CSD Incomplete policy is in alignment with University policy. An incomplete grade should be assigned in rare circumstances and is determined between consultation of the student, course instructor, and the Graduate Program Coordinator or Department Chair. The course instructor agrees to postpone the assignment of the final grade to allow completion of specific work that was not completed before the end of the semester. An Incomplete grade is assigned only when the instructor is persuaded that events beyond the student's control prevented the completion of assigned work on time and when the student has participated in more than 50% of the class. An Incomplete grade should not function as an accommodation/extension for students who are not formally receiving university accommodations. Students must earn a letter grade within one calendar year of the initial term of enrollment of the course. If the incomplete work is not submitted within the time allotted by the faculty member, the grade will automatically be changed to an "F" grade. Students receiving an Incomplete are not allowed to re-register for the same course until the incomplete has been made up or converted to an "F" grade. A student receiving an Incomplete may not make up missed work by sitting-in on the course the next time it is taught. Making up the work should be done through independent study or other mechanisms.

## Remediation Policy

In accordance with your SLP Graduate Student Handbook, students must receive an 80% or better on all summative assignments/evaluations during their graduate program. Scores less than 80% (or below an equivalent grade of B-) will necessitate remediation to assure student competence of the assessed knowledge/skill. It is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment with the instructor for remediation. Remediation activities are a distinct opportunity (not otherwise provided to the class) and may include an alternative assignment, resubmission, or individualized plan to demonstrate a clinical skill, as well as debriefing the original assignment or clinical skill. Remediation will not change the student's grade on the assignment/evaluation; however, 'competent' for the assignment will be shown in digital records. The plan must include a component of student reflection.

For assignments in didactic courses, remediation must be completed within 10 business days of the grade being posted, unless otherwise agreed upon by the instructor and student in written/electronic communication. Remediation activities and evaluation of competency, who will be evaluating the student's performance, and the date by which the activities will be completed will be developed and agreed upon by the faculty member (or the advisory committee if necessary) and the student. Students have two attempts to successfully remediate an assignment beyond their initial submission. If a student is unable to successfully remediate the assignment within two attempts (or has any missing summative assignments), they will fail the course.

In clinical practicum enrollments, skills needing remediation will be identified at midterms. Students will need to successfully and consistently remediate the skill by the end of the semester. It is expected that students continue to demonstrate growth from midterms to finals. If skills are identified for remediation after midterms, remediation plans will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If a student is unable to successfully remediate by the end of the semester, they fail the clinical practicum enrollment and no clinical clock hours are assigned for the experience.

## Policy on Graduate Students at Academic Risk

Instructors who identify a student at academic risk due to poor performance in coursework or practicum will refer the matter to the student's academic advisor and the Graduate Program Coordinator. If the advisor and instructor are the same person, a third advisory committee member (e.g., department chair, clinical supervisor) will be notified. The advisor or the advisor in consultation with the second and third committee members will be responsible for creating a plan of action designed to address the academic difficulties of the student. The plan of action will be presented to the student in writing, the advisor and the student will sign the plan, and the plan will be placed in the student's departmental file. The plan of action may be formulated in consultation with any faculty members or administrators deemed appropriate by the advisor.

## Policy on Grades Lower than a B-

Only courses with final grades of B- or above will be applied to the graduate program, including clinical practicum credits and prerequisite courses. Therefore, a student earning less than a B- in any graduate course (or receiving an administrative grade of W, I, L, or NG), must complete or repeat the course within one calendar year of the initial term of enrollment (excluding approved leaves) and earn a letter grade of no less than a B- in order for the credits to be applied to the graduate degree. For temporary or unresolved administrative grades (I, NG, or L), failure to resolve the grade within one calendar year will result in a conversion to an F. Repeated courses receiving a higher grade will not replace the previous course grade. Grades lower than a B- will remain on the transcript. Any student earning two or more course grades lower than a B- on their transcript will be required to withdraw from the program. This policy applies to prerequisite coursework completed after the offer of admission into the graduate

program, including prerequisite coursework taken during the graduate program at the University of Maine and through external institutions.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy

The University of Maine System applies a layered compliance framework where existing system-wide policies are supplemented by AI-specific guidance. Acceptable AI usage within learning and research for the Department of CSD will be at the discretion of the instructor. CSD instructors are responsible for implementing the University of Maine guidelines in their courses, including providing clear instruction on the ethical and responsible use of AI technologies by their students and teaching assistants. Acceptable AI usage will be expected to vary based on instructor and course, but all CSD instructors and students will be held to the University of Maine System's Academic Integrity Policy.

## SECTION D: Non-Thesis and Thesis Options

### Thesis Program of Study

In electing this option, the student registers for a total of 6 academic credit hours of CSD 699 (5) and INT 601 (1). For their enrollment in CSD 699, and with the assistance of a faculty advisor, the student conducts an approved research project, writes a thesis and completes an oral defense.

Students completing a thesis are also required to maintain their Student Portfolio Folder and complete the preliminary examination, as described in the comprehensive exam process for non-thesis students, but do not participate in a final presentation of their artifacts.

Students interested in completing a thesis as part of their M.A. program in CSD should consider this option at the start of their program and make a decision within their first year of the program to avoid extending their program of study. Students are encouraged to speak with all CSD faculty engaging in research in order to help with decision-making. Once a decision has been made to pursue the thesis option, the student should meet with the faculty member who will be advising the thesis and obtain consent. The student and faculty advisor should complete a tentative timeline for the thesis, which should include the following steps:

- Identify the research question and basic methodology.
- Obtain IRB approval for any research involving human participants.
- Assemble a thesis committee, which must include at a minimum three graduate faculty members, with at least one member from outside of the CSD faculty.
- Develop a thesis prospectus and initial committee meeting.
- Complete the written thesis.
- Orally defend the thesis successfully.
- Complete all thesis requirements by the appropriate deadlines as outlined by the Graduate School including completion of INT 601.

**Thesis Prospectus**

The thesis prospectus is a planning document that will enable the student to gain clarity and direction, and to make necessary changes in the thesis plan prior to investing a significant amount of time in research and writing. More specifically, the goals of the prospectus are:

- to encourage the student to identify the general problem area to be addressed in the thesis, to explore available resources, and to outline a method for data collection and analysis
- to inform the student's committee of the proposed plan for the thesis
- to facilitate discussion between the student and committee so that ideas may be generated, problems anticipated, and suggestions made
- to gain preliminary committee approval to proceed with thesis work

**Suggested Procedures**
The student works closely with the committee chair in determining the nature of the thesis, organization of the written prospectus, and obtaining committee approval.

1. The student meets with committee chair to discuss thesis and prospectus.
2. The student writes prospectus, distributes it to committee members, arranges meeting time to discuss the prospectus.
3. The student and committee meet and reach agreement on prospectus.
4. The committee signs "Approval of Prospectus" form (for student's file).

**Other Information on the Thesis Program**

- It is important that you are aware of the formatting requirements for theses, specified in the "Guidelines for Thesis Preparation" from the Graduate School: https://umaine.edu/graduate/students/progress/thesis-resources/
- If you are planning a thesis involving human participants, you may need to apply for IRB approval: https://umaine.edu/research-compliance/human-subjects/
- The Graduate Student Government frequently has small cash awards available to support student research. These awards can typically be used for equipment, travel, and library expenses.
- Our department contains diverse faculty research expertise, but so do other departments. We encourage students to find committee members from other departments.
- The final oral examination for students completing a thesis is an "Oral Thesis Defense." This includes a presentation on the student's thesis project, followed by a question and answer period with the general public and then a closed question and answer period with the student's thesis committee. During the closed question and answer period, the student's thesis committee members will ask questions related to 1) the thesis project's rationale, methods, results, and interpretation and 2) the application of the thesis project to clinical practice, including questions similar in content and rigor as the Comprehensive Examination for the Non-Thesis Option. Students must pass both components of the question-and-answer period to pass their thesis defense.

## Non-Thesis Program of Study

In electing this option, the student completes 6 credit hours in related coursework at the graduate level. These electives can be within the Department of CSD, such as CSD 586 (Current Issues in Clinical Practice), or in related disciplines. Undergraduate CSD courses required as background coursework do not count as electives. All non-thesis electives must be approved by the student's advisor. Additionally, each Non-Thesis student must successfully complete a Preliminary Examination as well as a Final Comprehensive Examination.

**Preliminary Examination Procedure**
To formally and objectively evaluate students' progress, graduate students will complete a preliminary examination in the Spring or Summer of their first year in the program, as determined by the CSD faculty. This preliminary examination provides students an opportunity to practice their oral communication skills and real-time integration of

knowledge, similar to the expectations of the oral comprehensive examination. Further, feedback from the preliminary examination can guide students' growth in their second year of study. Exact details of the format and content of the preliminary examination will be shared through the CSD MA Portfolio Brightspace page by the end of the fall semester of the first year.

Faculty will use a rubric to determine the results of the student's examination (pass, retake, fail). The student will leave the room while the faculty panel deliberates, and invited back to the room when the results of the examination are ready to be shared. A *Pass* indicates that the student has completed the requirements for the preliminary examination. Students receiving a *Fail* must edit their presentation based on their faculty panel's feedback. Students with an initial result of a *Fail* will be scheduled to present to a new faculty panel within two weeks of the original presentation. Students who do not pass the examination after their second attempt will complete an extensive remediation with an oral and written component at the discretion of the faculty panel based on performance during students' program of study and prelim/comp examination

**Comprehensive Examination Procedure**
The University of Maine Master of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders program requires a portfolio-based comprehensive examination. A portfolio-based comprehensive examination asks students to collect work that demonstrates their learning, growth, and competencies over a period of time. This assessment approach is comprehensive and holistic, allowing students to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge. The benefit of this portfolio -based approach is that the student has already completed the foundational work required for the examination. Exact details of the format and content of the comprehensive examination will be shared through the CSD MA Portfolio Brightspace page by the end of the fall semester of the first year. **Due dates specific to each graduate class will be provided during graduate orientation and should be strictly followed by the student.**

Around mid-terms of the student's final semester, the student will receive notification of their oral presentation. Faculty will use a rubric to determine the results of the student's examination (pass, retake, fail). After faculty panel deliberation, the student will be invited back to the room to receive the results of the examination. A *Pass* indicates that the student has completed the requirements for the examination. A *Retake* indicates minor revisions such that the student will edit their presentation and present on the same artifacts from the original presentation. Students receiving a *Fail* must choose three new artifacts and prepare a new presentation. Students with an initial result of a *Retake* or *Fail* will be scheduled to present to a new faculty panel within two weeks of the original presentation. Students who do not pass the examination after their second attempt will complete an extensive remediation with an oral and written component at the discretion of the faculty panel based on performance during students' program of study and prelim/comp examination

**Procedure for Awarding a Non-Thesis Degree**
A non-thesis degree is awarded when a "Completion of Degree Requirements" form is submitted by the Graduate Program Coordinator to the Graduate School. The degree

requirements are: 1) successful completion of all coursework on the student's Program of Study form, 2) successful completion of all required supervised clinical practicum hours and required associated activities and approval of clock hour form by the Coordinator of Clinical Training and/or Program Coordinator, and 3) successful completion of the Preliminary and Comprehensive Examinations. **STUDENTS MUST INFORM THE GRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR IN WRITING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER IN WHICH THEY PLAN TO GRADUATE.**

## SECTION E: Resolving Problems

### With the Department or University

Communication is interpersonal and always carries the risk of conflict. In your time here, you will establish many interpersonal relationships with your peers, your clients, your supervisors, and your instructors. It is inevitable that you may encounter conflict in some of these relationships.

If your problem has to do with a course, an instructor, a department policy, or your working conditions, the following is suggested. First, identify the problem as specifically and descriptively as possible. Second, present the problem to the person involved. For example, if a problem has to do with a particular course, discuss it with the instructor. If it has to do with department policies, see the Department Chair. If it has to do with a client, see your supervisor. If you are in doubt about where to start or who to see, talk with the Department Chair.

In the majority of cases, a mutually acceptable resolution of a problem can be reached in a face-to-face meeting. This does not necessarily mean that your point of view will automatically be adopted by the other person or that change will occur. After discussing the problem, you may conclude that your original perceptions were wrong or that the situation is not open for change at this time. Of course, you may also find that the problem is resolved in a manner that you find reasonable.

In the event that your informal pursuit of a problem does not lead to a resolution that is satisfactory to you, you may wish to pursue a more formal Appeals Procedure. First, you would appeal to the department including a committee of the Graduate Program Coordinator, Coordinator of Clinical Training, and Department Chair. The committee will identify the documentation that needs to be provided based on the nature of the appeal and you will then have two weeks to submit your appeal via email to the committee. The committee will meet and have a written decision within two weeks. If the department committee does *not* approve the appeal, the student should follow the guidelines in the University of Maine's Student Handbook or the Graduate Catalog: https://gradcatalog.umaine.edu/

### With the Council on Academic Accreditation

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association's Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) is responsible for overseeing the processes of accreditation and reaccreditation of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. Students with questions or complaints may contact the CAA at the following address:

Chair, Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2200 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850 or accreditation@asha.org.

## Equal Opportunity

The university offers internal complaint procedures to resolve concerns of discrimination or harassment on account of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, including transgender status or gender expression, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information, or veterans status.

*Complaints against faculty or staff or challenges to a university practice*

> If a faculty, staff member, or student believes that he or she is being discriminated against and the concern involves actions by a faculty, staff member, or student, or the issue relates to a university practice, the complaint may be resolved using the University of Maine Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure. This procedure provides for both informal and formal complaint resolution mechanisms. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Services can provide information about the process and explain the options available (https://umaine.edu/eo/complaints/).

*For members of the public*

> The University of Maine also provides a mechanism for individuals who are neither employees nor students of the University but who believe that they have been discriminated against.

Retaliation for bringing a complaint of discrimination or participating in an investigation into such concerns is prohibited.

Please contact the Director of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Services, 5713 Chadbourne Hall, Room 412, Orono, ME 04469 at 207-581-1226 (voice), TTY 711 (Maine Relay System), or equal.opportunity@maine.edu with questions or concerns.

## SECTION F: Support Services

The University of Maine offers various support services for students. The following resources are available (this list is not exhaustive):

Bookstore and Technology Center (Memorial Union)
Campus Activities and Student Engagement (149 Memorial Union, 581-8325)
Campus Recreation (New Balance Center, 581-1082)
Career Center (Memorial Union, 581-1359)
Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Programs (Memorial Union, 581-1734)
Counseling Center (581-1392)
Cutler Health Services (581-4000)
Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Services (5713 Chadbourne Hall, Room 412, 581-1226)
Graduate School (Stodder Hall, 581-3291)
Graduate Student Government (Memorial Union, 581-4548)
Graphic Print Solutions (581-3765)
Housing Services (103L Hilltop, 581-4580)
Information Technology (581-2506)
Office for Community and Connections (Memorial Union, 581-1437)
Office of Community Standards, Rights and Responsibilities (Memorial Union, 581-1406)
Office of International Programs (100 Winslow, 581-2905)
Student Accessibility Services (139 Rangely Rd., 581-2319)

## SECTION G: Department and University Forms

Copies of the following forms are available from the Department Office, the Graduate Program Coordinator, or the Graduate School on the website listed below.

https://umaine.edu/graduate/students/forms-and-documents/

Change of Program of Study Form
Completion of Oral Examination Requirement Form (Thesis)
Completion of Requirements Form
Course Equivalency Form
Exception to Regulation Form
Final Non-Thesis Form
Program of Study Form (Master's)
Request for On-Leave Status Form
Tentative Thesis Acceptance Form (Thesis)
Thesis Prospectus Form (Thesis)
Transfer Credit Form
Withdrawal from Program Form