

## M.C.D. DEGREE THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

Although the Master in Speech Pathology (M.S.P.) degree requires full-time, on-campus participation over a two year period, the Masters in Communication Disorders (M.C.D.) degree is offered only on a part-time basis through distance learning. Both degrees are rigorous, have structured curriculum sequences and require significant academic and personal commitment to successfully complete. The application and admission process is highly competitive and the graduate program itself is challenging for students. There are several things you must know and understand if you are planning to apply to the MCD degree to train graduate students in speech-language pathology and communication sciences and disorders.

Requirements for application include the following:

- GRE scores
  - ❑ Since your performance on the GRE is such an important component of the application process, you should consider specific preparation before taking the GRE.
  - ❑ GRE prep program materials are available for you to purchase and GRE preparatory training programs in which you can participate to maximize your test performance.
  - ❑ Check the GRE web site at [www.ets.org/gre/](http://www.ets.org/gre/) for test information and test dates.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation **from academic professors and clinical instructors** who are familiar with your academic and/or clinical abilities as a student
  - ❑ If you have been out of school for several years, you should update your vita, write each instructor from whom you are requesting a reference, remind them of the courses you took with them (including the grade you earned) and provide them with a copy of your updated vita. This will help them provide the best recommendation on your behalf. The more information you can provide potential references the easier it is for them to write a recommendation on your behalf. Although coworkers, ministers, friends and family are able to provide a character reference, they **do not** have knowledge of your academic abilities and classroom performance as a student and **should not** be asked to serve as academic references.
  - ❑ If you are unable to obtain all three (3) letters from course instructors, a **minimum** of two (2) letters of recommendation should be obtained from college or university instructors with direct knowledge of you as a student and the third may be from a current employer.
- College transcript credit in each of the following areas:
  - ❑ College-level Mathematics (Statistics is strongly preferred and may soon be required; Calculus; etc) (*NOTE: teaching math is excluded*)
  - ❑ Social/Behavioral Science (Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, etc)
  - ❑ Biological Science (Biology, Human Anatomy, Zoology, Ecology, etc); and
  - ❑ Physical Science (Physics and/or Chemistry are strongly preferred; Geology, Oceanography, etc.)
- GPAs from all undergraduate and graduate degree programs in which applicants have been enrolled are considered in the competitive application process.

Note: GPAs, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, statement of intent and resume are very important factors in each student's application and are given significant consideration by the admissions committee in the application review process.

### **MCD Applicants WITH a Speech Background**

For students who have an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology (or a communication sciences and disorders discipline), the MCD degree curriculum begins summer semester, requires three-years (10 semesters), 68 semester hours and is offered only as part-time degree. Students must progress through the curriculum sequence as scheduled. Students are **not allowed** to modify the MCD curriculum for the purpose of expediting graduation.

### **MCD Applicants WITHOUT a Speech Background**

For students who do not have an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology (or a communication sciences and disorders discipline) but have a bachelor's degree in another discipline, the MCD degree curriculum begins fall semester, requires four-years (12 semesters), 83 semester hours and is offered only as a part-time degree program. However, due to the necessity of adding clinical observation and prerequisite/leveling courses to the program of study, the part-time degree for students without a background in speech extends to a four-year program. It is **not possible** to modify the MCD curriculum for the purpose of expediting graduation.

### **Distance Education**

Courses offered in the MCD degree curriculum are delivered via distance learning and are supplemented with web based instruction. The COMD courses offered through distance education are delivered primarily in DVD format and are supplemented with web-based instructional support. Please understand that this is **NOT an on-line degree** program. Classes may be viewed at home or at any location you choose to view your classes on a DVD player, laptop or through supplemental video streaming, and/or web-based programs such as Blackboard. Video conferencing may also be utilized to enhance communication opportunities with course instructors. Additionally, there may be a Saturday class meeting planned by an instructor while you are in the program. Any conflicts should be addressed with the course instructor. Academic and clinical advisements are scheduled on one Saturday during late fall and spring semesters. Attempts are always made to coordinate any class meeting with advisement on campus.

### **Clinical Practicum**

Clinical practicum experiences are obtained primarily during the summer months. The first summer clinical practicum experience takes place at one of several pediatric practicum sites at different locations in South Carolina. The second summer clinical practicum and final clinical internship are arranged at an approved site near where the student lives. Supervision, authorization and documentation of all clinical observation and practicum experiences must be provided by an ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) certified speech-language pathologist who holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP).

For students without a background in speech-language pathology, clinical observation requirements are incorporated into the program through the year until the first summer practicum at the end of the second year. Approximate time-lines for summer practicum are:

- 1st summer of clinical practicum            4-6 weeks (*takes place in South Carolina*)
- 2nd summer of clinical practicum            6-8 weeks
- 3rd summer of clinical practicum            8-10 weeks

➤ NOTE: Additional optional practicum may be necessary to obtain the required hours of clinical practicum experience. However, the 4-6 weeks of the first summer practicum in South Carolina is required for all MCD students. We have had students from other states throughout the United States and other countries who have already completed this experience in South Carolina. Remember, this is only for the first of three summers of clinical practicum while you are in the program.

### **Financial Aid.**

You are encouraged to search online for available scholarship opportunities. There are many web sites on which you may register and set up a profile to receive timely notices of scholarship offerings. Additionally, if you visit the U.S.C. Financial Aid and Scholarships web page at [www.sc.edu/financialaid](http://www.sc.edu/financialaid) you will find other links to scholarship opportunities. Current tuition and fee information, specific to the Arnold School of Public Health, is available at <http://www.sph.sc.edu/currentstudents/fees.htm>

You may ask, "What are the advantages and benefits of a graduate program in speech-language pathology offered through distance education?" Included next are the advantages of a part-time degree program through distance learning.

### **ADVANTAGES OF MCD DEGREE PROGRAM**

- MCD students can be employed while obtaining the MCD degree
- MCD students, if certified to teach in South Carolina public schools, are eligible for reduced tuition (based on South Carolina residency and/or currently working in a South Carolina school district).
- MCD students can take MCD courses in the comfort of their home environment, at the office or on-the-go via a portable DVD player or laptop computer.
- MCD students can watch recorded class lectures/presentations at times convenient to their own schedules each week.
- MCD students can take exams in regional testing sites located near their home area of the state in which they live.
- MCD students may take elective course modules in the traditional on-campus program if desired.
- MCD students graduate with a "Masters plus 30 semester hour equivalent" becoming eligible for additional salary increases in South Carolina's (and some other state's) public schools and agencies that recognize the "plus 30" status.
- MCD students are eligible become members of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA) and receive ASHA professional journals. Student membership qualifies graduates for reduced fees when they apply for certification and membership in ASHA after graduation.
- MCD graduates are eligible for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) upon completion of the Clinical Fellowship (CF) and after passing the PRAXIS examination.
- MCD graduates are eligible for state license in Speech-Language Pathology in states whose requirements are based on meeting the criteria for the ASHA CCC-SLP.
- MCD students significantly increase their knowledge base and achieve clinical competencies in all aspects of speech-language pathology in the following nine areas:
  - Articulation
  - Fluency
  - Voice and resonance, including respiration and phonation
  - Receptive and expressive language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and manual modalities

- Hearing, including the impact on speech and language
- Swallowing (oral, pharyngeal, esophageal, and related functions, including oral function for feeding)
- Cognitive aspects of communication (e.g. attention, memory, sequencing, problem solving, executive functioning)
- Social aspects of communication (e.g. behavioral and social skills affecting communication)
- Communication modalities (e.g. oral, manual, and augmentative and alternative communication techniques and assistive technologies)

Applications must be completed electronically. This online process must be completed by the February 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Only complete applications will be reviewed. If you are interested in applying to The Graduate School as an MCD degree candidate in Communication Sciences and Disorders, be sure to start the process early enough to allow plenty of time to have all components completed by the final deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup>. You must follow all instructions provided online by The Graduate School after initiating the application process.

Go to [www.gradschool.sc.edu](http://www.gradschool.sc.edu)

Click on "Apply Now" button

If you would like to receive information about the MCD program, please contact:

Teresa Boyett

[tboyett@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:tboyett@mailbox.sc.edu)

(803) 777-3080

If you have additional questions about the MCD degree, please contact:

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For additional information about the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, please go to the web site at [www.sph.sc.edu/comd](http://www.sph.sc.edu/comd).