

# The 2009 Graduate Handbook

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Communication Disorders (ComD) Department, Brigham Young University (BYU)

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## 0. About this handbook

This handbook lists the policies, procedures, resources, and expectations for graduate students in the department of Communication Disorders (ComD). This version of the handbook supersedes and replaces all previous versions, memos, and updates. Its information is subject to correction or change at any time. A current version of the handbook is available through the departmental web site. The department will attempt to notify current students by e-mail or memo of any handbook changes, however, students are responsible for meeting the policies and requirements of the most recent handbook version. The contact person for this handbook is the ComD Graduate Coordinator Dr. Ron Channell, 128 TLRB - BYU, Provo, Utah 84602; (801) 422-6457; email: rwc5@byu.edu

## **1. Overview of the graduate program**

The graduate program in ComD at BYU leads to the master of science (MS) degree and to completion of all the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) requirements in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) except for the Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY). Upon completion of the program and payment of a fee, students will receive a Utah School credential. Upon completion of the CCC, students may obtain a Utah state licence for work in non-school settings. Admissions applications for the upcoming academic year are considered in February; admitted students may arrange to begin coursework in any semester or term, but typically do so either Spring or Fall. Students entering the program with all undergraduate prerequisite courses completed typically take six semesters to complete the program, with spring and summer terms counting together as one semester. All students are required to acceptably complete all required courses and clinical assignments and to write an acceptable thesis. The program workload (but not the credit hour distribution) reflects a division roughly into thirds: about one-third coursework, one-third clinical work, and one-third thesis. A program profile, describing graduate admissions and completion statistics, is on-line at <http://education.byu.edu/comd/documents/GraduateProgramProfiles.pdf>

## **2. Admissions procedures**

Admissions decisions to the ComD MS program are made by the ComD department faculty as a whole.

### **2.a. Program size**

The department may have up to 50 graduate students at any one time. Obviously, the number who graduate or leave the program each year will affect the number of new students who can be admitted.

### **2.b. Application deadline**

The application deadline each year will be the first work day in February. Applications are reviewed only once a year. Students should hear back during or before the first week in March.

### **2.c. Required information from applicants**

The following materials are submitted to the BYU Graduate School (B-356 ASB): (a) Application form & fee, (b) Transcripts from all colleges or universities attended, (c) Graduate Record Exam scores, (d) Three letters of recommendation, and (e) Letter of intent. Applications may be made on-line.

### **2.d. Dispensation of submitted materials**

Application materials sent to the ComD department are held for one year and then destroyed if the student was not admitted. If the student was admitted, the materials become part of the student's departmental file.

### **2.e. Candidate ranking criteria**

Each faculty member rates each applicant in two areas (academic and professional) using a 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) scale. The academic scale is multiplied by 1.5 and is added to the professional rating; each applicant thus receives a rating from 2 (lowest) to 12.5 (highest). These ratings are entered in a spreadsheet, averaged, and candidates are placed on a list sorted from highest to lowest by average ranking, with all ratings displayed. Copies of this list are distributed to the faculty. The faculty meet, discuss any disparities in rankings, and individually adjust their ratings as they see fit, given the information presented in discussion. These adjusted ratings are entered into the spreadsheet, averaged, and re-sorted from highest to lowest.

### **2.f. Acceptance**

Given the number of openings, the available faculty and clinical resources, and the quality of applying students, the faculty decide in the rating discussion meeting as to the number of students to offer admission to. Admitted applicants are asked to reply within 3 weeks to either accept or decline admission.

### **2.g. Admission for certification only**

The ComD department has no non-degree programs for certification, fulfilling prerequisites, or continuing

education.

### **3. Between admissions and program start**

Students are assigned a graduate advisor at the time of admission, and should contact their advisor about transfer classes (see section 4.e. Non-BYU course equivalence, below), classes to register for, and any other questions. Advising faculty should know the courses and other requirements of the graduate program. At the start of their graduate program, students should meet all the faculty and chat with each about their research areas and thesis possibilities.

A graduate orientation meeting is held the first Thursday of the Fall semester. New and continuing students and faculty should attend. Revised handbooks, forms, and other information will be presented.

## **4. Program requirements**

### **4.a. The Plan of Study**

The Plan of Study is a form designated by the BYU Graduate Office for the declaration by the student of the courses which, with approval of the student-selected advisory committee, will be taken to complete the master's degree. This is essentially a contract with the university that the degree will be granted upon completion of the comprehensive exam and the courses listed on the form (including 699R, Thesis).

The ComD secretaries help with filling out the form, which is then signed by the advisory committee and sent to the ComD Graduate Coordinator. The advisory committee is three or more graduate faculty members. The advisory committee chair is the graduate faculty member who will chair the student's thesis. The advisory committee will also function as the thesis oral examining committee.

The Plan of Study should be filed during the first year of graduate study. With advisory committee consent, changes in this plan of study can be made, including changes in advisory committee membership.

### **4.b. Progress toward graduation**

The graduate program is designed to be completed in two years (5 semesters) or in three years (8 semesters) by students coming from a different undergraduate major). The university allows a maximum of five years to complete a master's degree **only** if a student is making satisfactory progress toward graduation during that time. Progress is defined as acceptably passing classes, progressing toward thesis and clinic requirement completion, and passing the comprehensive exam. Each student's progress toward degree completion is evaluated three times a year, shortly after the end of each semester.

### **4.c. Minimum Registration**

Minimum registration is 6 credit hours per year, plus (a) students must register for and complete at least 2 credit hours their first semester of graduate study, and (b) students must be registered for at least two hours during the semester of the thesis defense. Spring and Summer terms are counted together as being a single semester for these registration requirements.

In addition, a student must be registered for at least 3 semester hours when working on campus (which includes graduate assistantships). Spring and Summer terms are counted separately for this requirement.

### **4.d. Non-BYU course equivalence**

Though a student may have taken courses elsewhere, BYU's graduate program must certify to ASHA that the requirements for clinical certification have been met. Thus the ComD department needs to be convinced that courses taken elsewhere are equivalent in breadth, depth, and rigor to BYU's courses.

Students who did not receive their bachelor's degree in ComD at BYU within five years of starting graduate school will be given a Plan of Study worksheet which lists required classes taught at BYU on the undergraduate level as well as the required graduate classes. The student should meet with the instructor of the BYU

equivalent ComD class, prepared with documentation such as texts, syllabus, exams, notes, etc. to determine course equivalence. The student should then list the agreed-upon equivalencies on the Plan of Study worksheet next to the applicable BYU class. Courses for which equivalence cannot be established are listed on the Plan of Study and thus will be taken as part of the graduate program.

#### 4.e. Required Academic Courses and Sequence

The required academic courses are described in the BYU Graduate Catalog and listed on the plan of study form. For students who earned a bachelor's degree which is equivalent to BYU's ComD major, the two typical sequences of graduate courses are as follows (all classes listed are ComD department offerings):

##### Students Who Start Spring Term

###### Spring (1st year)

634 Traumatic Brain Injury (2)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Fall (1st year)

600 Research Methods (3; or can be taken Winter)  
601 Neurofoundations of Lang., Speech, & Hearing (3)  
610 Assessment and Diagnosis (3)  
630 Early Child Language Development & Intervention (3)  
657 Voice and Resonance Disorders (3)  
658 Fluency Disorders (3)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Winter (1st year)

600 Research Methods (3; if not taken Fall)  
674 Autism and Severe Disabilities (3)  
675 Motor Speech Disorders (3)  
676 Aphasia (3)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Spring (2nd year)

633 Dysphagia Management (2)  
636 Multicultural Issues in SLP (3)  
679 School-Age Language Disorders (3)

###### Fall and Winter (2nd year)

699R Thesis and Practicum (688R)

##### Students Who Start Fall Semester

###### Fall (1st year)

601 Neurofoundations of Lang., Speech, & Hearing (3)  
610 Assessment and Diagnosis (3)  
630 Early Child Language Development & Intervention (3)  
657 Voice and Resonance Disorders (3)  
658 Fluency Disorders (3)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Winter (1st year)

600 Research Methods (3)  
674 Autism and Severe Disabilities (3)  
675 Motor Speech Disorders (3)  
676 Aphasia (3)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Spring (1st year)

633 Dysphagia Management (2)  
634 Traumatic Brain Injury (2)  
688R Practicum in SLP (1)

###### Fall and Winter (2nd year)

699R Thesis, and Practicum (688R)

###### Spring (2nd year)

636 Multicultural Issues in SLP (3)  
679 School-Age Language Disorders (3)

**Either Spring or Fall Entry:** A total of 6 hours of thesis (699R) and at least 5 hours of clinical practicum (688R) are required; as can be seen above, these hours are taken one or two at a time across several semesters.

#### 4.f. Course performance expectation

Students must earn a grade of B- or better in any class for the class to automatically count toward degree requirements. Courses with grades lower than B- will only be counted with the voted approval of the graduate faculty, and student progress for that semester will most likely be rated as unsatisfactory (see section 6, Graduate Student Evaluation).

#### 4.g. Tracking Policy of Skill Outcomes (Adopted by the faculty on January 18, 2007)

##### Academic Coursework

###### Graduate Courses

Each instructor will be responsible to validate that each student meets the level of competency established for their particular course. Failure for the student to meet competency in a specified area, regardless of overall course grade, must be reported and remediation attempted. Students not meeting the established

competency level will be reported to the department secretary along with information as to the area of deficiency and the type of remediation. Once remediation has occurred, it is the responsibility of the instructor to notify the department secretary. The department secretary will enter these conditions onto the student's individual record (i.e., database).

The instructor has the following options in dealing with competency problems:

1. The instructor may fail the student in the course, regardless of overall performance.
2. The instructor may give the student an "incomplete" for the course (this results in an official university contract for remediation between the instructor and student).
3. The instructor may also require remediation of the problem during the term for which the student is registered in the course.

Although remediation is necessary, and failure for the competency to be remediated will result in the student being dropped from the graduate program, it is at the instructor's discretion to decide how this will be handled and how it may influence grading. That is, successful remediation does not necessarily have to result in a change in the course grade.

The options and actions must be noted in the course syllabus.

#### Undergraduate Courses

Students receiving a grade of B- or higher will have met the competencies stated in the individual syllabus. Students receiving a grade of C+ or lower will have not meet competency requirements in one or more areas as designated on the course syllabus.

The instructor has the following options in dealing with competency problems:

1. The instructor may fail the student or give the student a grade of C+ or lower.
2. The instructor may give the student an "incomplete" for the course (this results in an official university contract for remediation between the instructor and the student).
3. The instructor may also require remediation of the problem during the term for which the student is registered in the course resulting in a grade of B- or higher.

#### Transfer Credit

Transfer credit will only be accepted from CAA approved programs. The credit, which includes pre-requisites, will be evaluated by the Graduate Coordinator to verify that competencies equivalent to what is offered on our similar courses are met. This will include copies of course syllabi and a statement from the transferring program that the competencies have been met. If this cannot be confirmed, either coursework from our program or another formal means of remediation will need to occur and be specified in the student's plan of study. Regardless, pre-requisites, which include deficient competencies, must be met prior to enrolling in courses where the expectations are that previous competencies have occurred.

### **4.h. Clinical practicum**

The clinical experiences are the "labs" for the academic courses in both disorders and scientific foundations. Clinic constitutes approximately one-third of the student's graduate work. Students should plan their clinical work with the same care they plan their thesis and their academic program. Becoming a competent clinician and giving high-quality care to their clients should be high priorities. Clinical expectations are detailed in the Speech and Language Clinic Handbook. Students are expected to abide by the University Honor Code and the ASHA Code of Ethics [see Appendix]. Criminal background checks, fingerprinting, and drug tests are required by various practicum placement settings.

#### **4.h.1. Clinical hours**

A total of at least 375 clinical hours (including the 25 observation hours that the student should have earned before starting the graduate program) are required by ASHA and for BYU graduation. Often it is to the student's advantage to do even more than the minimum number of clinical hours; for example, an additional externship may open up opportunities otherwise not available. Fifty of these hours must be completed on-site at BYU, before going to any extern sites. Students are required to earn their remaining hours in at least two other sites, generally one hospital and one school setting. Earning clinical hours in more than two other sites gives the student a broader experience base and is recommended for those wishing to become practicing clinicians.

BYU's clinical program is set up to thoroughly orient and train the student during the in-house phase, then to give them experience with many client types, in different extern settings. Descriptions of all the extern sites are on file in 136 TLRB. As the student completes the in-house training, they should work with the SLP clinic director to determine the extern site options that would best suit their interests, goals, and abilities.

#### **4.h.2. Plan for clinical study**

During the first semester, the student meets with the clinic director to formulate a plan for clinical study. This is a term-by-term outline of the clinical program, similar in function to the study plan or the thesis prospectus. The plan for clinical study takes into account the student's workload, as it varies by semester with class and thesis plans. It helps assure that

- the student will have high-quality clinical experiences
- student demand is coordinated with site availability.
- students are not scrambling to "get hours" at the end of their program
- student individual clinical needs and interests are taken into account.

The student must meet with the clinic director to have any changes in the clinical plan approved.

#### **4.h.3. Student responsibility to clinical sites**

A site (extern site or BYU clinic) is a complete experience. Students don't "get hours" at their convenience; they work as a professional at a site on that site's terms until the experience is complete. Their cooperation with site requirements helps the ComD department to maintain harmonious relationships with the various sites; it also helps the student have a less fragmented, more satisfying and useful experience.

#### **4.h.4. Clinic progress ratings**

Clinical progress is assessed by the clinic director, with input from on- or off-site supervisors. Progress ratings are based on a list of global and specific competencies (see clinical handbook).

#### **4.h.5. Recording clinical hours**

Students are responsible to insure that practicum hours are safely recorded in the ComD department office.

#### **4.h.6. Client Confidentiality Agreement**

Each graduate student must have a signed Client Confidentiality Agreement form in their file in the ComD department office before doing any observation, assessment, or treatment hours. Client confidentiality is mandated by law and the code of ethics of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. All students taking part in clinical practicum must sign a confidentiality statement stating that they will protect the confidentiality of clients. If you have not already signed a confidentiality statement at BYU please see the secretary in room 136 to do so immediately.

All client records at the BYU Speech-Language and Audiology Clinics are confidential. All information regarding clients is privileged communication. Students are granted access to clinic information for only those individuals that they are treating. Client files must be checked out of the Records/Materials Center. Clinic reports must be written on dedicated servers and computers within the John Taylor building. Reports should not be written or transmitted over the internet. At no time should client reports or files (paper or electronic) be taken outside of the Clinic. Files, videos, tapes, language sample transcriptions, data sheets, and anything else pertaining to your client should be stored in the file cabinet located in room 120. If you need to check files out over the weekend please keep the files in the file cabinet in room 120. Please do not keep files or other sensitive material in lockers. You may check files out for an extended period of time as long as you keep the files in room 120. Videos of clients may not leave the building. Destroy all paperwork regarding clients when it is no longer required. A shredding machine is located in Room 136 and at the receptionist's desk.

Discussions of a client's case should never take place in the hallways or other unsecured locations. Please use a therapy room or office. Client names should only be used when absolutely necessary. Clients should never be

discussed with roommates, family, or others not directly associated with the client's case. Do not invite friends, family members, or others to observe you.

If you must leave a message for a client over the phone, leave only your name, that you are calling from the BYU speech-language clinic, and your phone number. Do not mention the client's name or why you are calling; the person receiving the message will usually understand why you are calling.

When requesting files from the Records/Materials Center, if you don't know the client number, write the name down to give to the personnel rather than speaking the client's name for others to hear.

Information regarding a client, including the fact that the client is receiving treatment at the clinic, can only be released to an outside agency with the written permission of the client or a person responsible for the client.

## **5. Financial Issues**

### **5.a. Scholarships:**

New students are considered for scholarships as part of the application process; the rankings generated for admissions are used for scholarships. Continuing students who have filed their plan of study and are making satisfactory progress toward degree completion are considered for these scholarships at the end of Winter Semester. Scholarship recipients are notified of the dollar amount by letter. Unless the student requests otherwise by working with the department secretary prior to tuition deadline for the term(s) involved, the scholarship award will be applied toward tuition.

Scholarship funding comes from two main sources. The major source is from the BYU Graduate Studies office. This money is a budget allocation and disappears at the end of the fiscal year. The second source is from people who have established scholarship funds specific to the ComD department. Currently there are two of these. The first fund was established in honor of Dr. Alonzo and Sister Eloise Morley; Dr. Morley was the first speech pathologist at BYU and played a key role in founding our program. The second fund was established by the family of Janet Sant in her memory. Janet earned a master's degree in SLP at BYU in 1978; she was committed to helping students with language and learning disabilities and taught them for 17 years.

About two-thirds of the available scholarship money is allocated to first-year graduate students and the other third to second-year students. Generally, the top-ranked incoming students are offered at least half the amount of LDS tuition for Fall and Winter semesters, and all second-year students receive about one-fourth the amount of LDS tuition for Fall and Winter semesters. (Second year students typically take far fewer credit hours than first-year students.) Students are encouraged to apply for graduate fellowships (through the Office of Graduate Studies) for their second year; these fellowships offer stipends of up to \$4000, beyond any other financial aid.

Overall, about half of the departmental scholarship money is allocated for Fall semester and half for Winter semester. When there is more money than needed to meet the guidelines above, second-year students coming from outside ComD who did well their first year may receive 1/2 the LDS tuition amount rather than 1/4 for their second year, as it is their first year of graduate classes. When a newly-admitted student indicates that they will not be attending BYU, their scholarship award is passed down to other admitted students.

### **5.b. Assistantships**

Two kinds of assistantships are available. Both types are filled by individual faculty selection; students interested in working with a particular faculty member should let that faculty member know of their interest.

1. Departmental assistantships are funded as part of the department's yearly budget and include such duties as grading exams, holding lab or help sessions for classes, assisting in clinic scheduling, etc. Hours worked are recorded on a time card and submitted through the ComD departmental secretary. Each faculty member is allotted a certain number of departmental assistantship hours and select the student(s) to hold these positions.

2. Research assistantships are funded as part of faculty research grants and include such duties as data collection, language sample transcription, data analysis, etc. Faculty typically include in the grant proposal a

budget for assistants to perform specified duties and select the student(s) to do this work. Hours worked are recorded on a time card and submitted through the ComD departmental secretary.

## 6. Graduate Student Evaluation

### 6.a. Schedule

Each graduate student is formally evaluated after each semester, with spring and summer terms considered together as one semester. On an ongoing and less formal basis, if a graduate student needs to be chastened, corrected, talked to, or made aware of something, the other faculty involved will tend to have the student's advisory/thesis chair carry out the task. The chair is the student's advocate and defender but also acts as counselor and, of anyone on the faculty, takes responsibility for maximizing the student's performance.

### 6.b. Evaluation Procedures

The faculty meet and for each student consider progress made during the semester in terms of courses taken and grades received, reports from clinical settings, a report from the thesis chair on progress, and a report from the department secretary or graduate coordinator on progress in filing documents (plan of study, prospectus approval, comprehensive exam scores, etc.).

Student progress is rated as satisfactory, marginal, or unsatisfactory. Marginal progress is an expression of concern and is accompanied by a statement as to what must be done to return to satisfactory progress. The following conditions would generally lead to a marginal progress evaluation:

- (a) no Plan of Study was submitted during the first year
- (b) no prospectus was approved during the second year (for students with a ComD bachelor's degree)
- (c) the thesis defense was not passed during the third year (for students with a ComD bachelor's degree)
- (d) interactional or communication deficiencies exist which impair professional success.

Students are expected to resolve specified concerns before the next review. Failure to resolve the matter on time will change the evaluation to unsatisfactory progress. An unsatisfactory progress evaluation may also result from:

- (a) poor performance in a class or classes, such as a grade in a class of less than a B-. Remediation will be specified by the instructor and may require such things as retaking the class, doing remedial work associated with the class, or taking additional coursework.
- (b) poor performance in a clinical setting which requires an additional turn in that or a similar setting
- (c) cumulative graduate GPA falling below 3.0
- (d) the comprehensive exam being attempted but not passed at the ComD department-specified level.

**Students are dropped from the graduate program by the graduate school if they receive two consecutive non-satisfactory ratings (i.e., either *Marginal* or *Unsatisfactory*). Also, students are dropped from the graduate program by the ComD department the third time they receive an *Unsatisfactory* progress evaluation.**

According to the BYU Graduate Studies catalog, a student may also be dropped from the program if she or he:

- (a) fails to maintain minimum registration.
- (b) receives a marginal or unsatisfactory rating in a periodic review by the academic department and is unable or unwilling to comply with conditions for continuance outlined by the department.
- (c) fails to make what the department or the university deems to be satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree
- (d) fails the departmental comprehensive examination or the thesis defense
- (e) violates the university's standards of conduct or the Honor Code.

### 6.c. Notification

Students receive a letter regarding each progress evaluation. This letter is written by the ComD department graduate coordinator. If the letter reflects an unsatisfactory or marginal progress rating, it is hand-delivered to

the student in a meeting with the student's advisory committee chair, or if the student is living out of the local area, the letter is sent through the mail.

## **7. The Thesis requirement**

A thesis is a written document that describes a completed research project which represents an original contribution to the knowledge of the field. This document describes the study's rationale, hypotheses, relevant literature, methods, findings, and conclusions. It is written to allow others to learn how and why the study was done, what was found, and what these findings might mean for the field.

The thesis is usually a result of a student's close collaboration with one or more faculty members. When the thesis defense (also known as the Final Oral, Oral Defense, or the Final Defense) is scheduled, a copy of the thesis is placed in the ComD departmental office and is available for reading by anyone in the university community.

Upon completion, an electronic copy of the thesis (in PDF format) is submitted to the university library. This allows the thesis to be read by --and be of use to-- people around the world. Assistance on electronic submission may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies ETD (Electronic Theses & Dissertations) website, the ComD 600 course instructor, or the ComD Graduate coordinator.

### **7.a. Selecting a thesis topic and chair**

The student selects a thesis chair from among the ComD graduate faculty, subject to the chair's agreement. The graduate faculty are (in alphabetical order) Drs. Brinton, Channell, Culatta, Dromey, Fujiki, Harris, McPherson, and Nissen. Chair selection is made mainly on the basis of the student's interest in doing a thesis in a faculty member's area of research expertise. When chosen, the thesis chair takes over as the student's general academic advisor as well. The selection of a thesis chair is made official by having that person sign (as chair) on the Plan of Study (Form 3). If circumstances such as major changes in thesis topic, preference, or faculty availability arise the student may select a different chair.

The university requires that the student take a cumulative total of (at least) 6 hours of thesis credit (ComD 699R). The ComD department requires that no more than two of these hours may be taken before prospectus approval.

### **7.b. International ESL Student option**

This option applies only to students who are classified by the university as being both "international" and ESL (meaning that the TOEFL was required as part of the admissions process) and who, at the time of the prospectus meeting, do not intend to remain in the United States after graduation.

At the time of prospectus approval, IESL students will make a binding decision as to whether they will either: A. complete the same the thesis and comprehensive examination requirements as other, non-IESL students, or B. pass the ASHA NTE Praxis exam at ASHA's passing level AND also complete one of the following two additional writing requirements after completing and successfully defending the thesis in English.

1. Submit the work from the thesis as a journal article in the student's native language to an approved journal from the student's native country and receive back reviews that, in the consensus of the Graduate faculty, are positive. The article does not have to be accepted by the journal. The student should realize that it may take as long as six months for a journal article manuscript to be reviewed and returned. The student may recommend the journal that they will submit the manuscript to, but the selection and approval of the journal is the responsibility of the Graduate faculty.

2. Submit the thesis, written in the student's native language, to a minimum of two approved outside readers from the student's native country. The reviewers would be asked to critique the thesis and to render an opinion as to whether or not this would meet their standards for acceptance of a thesis. The response from at least one of the two reviewers will then be reviewed by the Graduate faculty, who will the vote as to whether the student passed. The faculty anticipate that this outside review process will take from 3 to 6 weeks. The student may

recommend the outside reviewers to whom the thesis will be submitted, but the selection and approval of the reviewers is the responsibility of the Graduate faculty.

For either native language option, non-favorable outside reviews will necessitate revision and resubmission for further outside review. Repetition of this process may lead the Graduate faculty to rate the student's progress as unsatisfactory. This additional writing requirement is defined as being part of the comprehensive exam, and thus the thesis (in English) will not be officially accepted by the department until the student has passed this requirement.

### **7.c. The sections of the thesis**

- **University pages:** Several pages at the front of the thesis are mandated by BYU's Office of Graduate Studies (OGS), such as a title page, committee acceptance page, approval pages, and abstract. The OGS has printed guidelines for these pages; copies are distributed to students each year. These pages are available in electronic (pdf) format and should be adapted for use. These pages are printed single sided.
- **Table of Contents:** A table of contents is required. If the thesis has more than one table, figure, or appendix, include a list of tables, figures, or appendices. The titles of the table of contents, list of tables, etc. can either be in all upper-case or in title case; these pages are generally printed double-sided (if odd-numbered pages can be kept on the front side) but may be printed single-sided. MS Word versions of these pages are available and should be adapted for use. The MSoE (McKay School of Education) insists that all subheadings be listed in the Table of Contents.
- **Introduction/Review of Literature:**

The Introduction gives an overview of the topic and justifies this topic as a contribution to the literature of the discipline. It cites facts which serve as premises from which the thesis topic is a logical deduction. It shows how the thesis addresses a topic of real concern or interest in current literature and explains why the study will add something non-trivial to that literature. It culminates with a succinct statement of the particular problem or hypotheses to be examined.

In the Review of Literature section, the student demonstrates a clear understanding of the literature which surrounds and justifies the current topic. The sources of ideas important to the thesis are cited, and empirical studies which underlay or justify the focus or method of the current study are discussed in detail.

These two sections (Introduction and Review of Literature) may be combined into a single ("Introduction") section if the advisory committee chooses.

- **Method:** The subjects, instruments, measures, and procedures are described here in sufficient detail to allow replication by other researchers. This section must build the reader's confidence that the data collected will be valid, reliable, and relevant to answering the research questions or hypotheses posed in the introduction.
- **Results:** The findings of the study are presented here, illustrated with tables or figures as expedient. Explanation or interpretation is saved for the Discussion section.
- **Discussion:** The findings (results) of the current study are discussed in reference to (a) the hypotheses or questions posed in the Introduction, (b) the methods used in the study, and (c) the findings or conclusions of other studies cited in the Introduction section. The implications of the findings for any theories or clinical practices discussed in the Introduction, as well as for future research, are described here.
- **References:** All references cited anywhere in the thesis are included here.
- **Appendices:** The committee may specify the inclusion of raw data, additional tables or figures, informed consent form, etc. as appendices.

### **7.d. Thesis style requirements**

Thesis style refers to the page layout, method of referencing, format for tables, and so on. The style of the front pages, and the requirements for margins, fonts, and other thesis aspects are set by the Graduate School. Other aspects are determined by the ComD department or the MSoE.

### **7.e. APA Style and Variances**

Theses in SLP will use the style guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Ed., commonly known as the APA Manual, except for the sectional division (described above)

and the following changes or clarifications:

1. Don't include a second title page or abstract; use only the University title and abstract pages as specified above.
2. Except for the University front pages, the thesis is formatted so it will print double-sided.
3. Margins: 1.5 inches on the bound edge, 1 inch on other edges, with the top of the page numbers one half inch from the top, one inch in from the outside edge.
4. No corner heading with the page number.
5. Tables may be single spaced but still (as in APA) leave some space above and below spanner lines. Tables must be either all single spaced or all double spaced; don't mix spacing styles. If a table continues on to another page, don't have a bottom spanner line until the final end of the table. You may put a line saying "(table continues)" at the bottom right of the first page(s) of the table, but this line is optional. The MSOE insists that shorter tables be embedded in the text.
6. Use a decimal tab to align columns of numbers in a table.
7. Tables and figures are mixed into the text, or if large enough to be on separate pages, should be collated into the text so as to be the next page after the page of first mention. The title should be kept with the table or figure.
8. Text must be double spaced. References may be double-spaced, or they may be single-spaced but with a blank line between references. Appendices may be single spaced.
9. The top of sideways tables should be on the left, whether it is on an odd- or even-numbered page.
10. The MSOE insists on "widow/orphan" control.

## **7.f. The prospectus**

The prospectus is a formalized plan for carrying out a research project. It describes the topic to be studied, justifies the study of a topic in light of published studies, and specifies the subjects, instruments, and procedures to be used in the study. Its preparation and the negotiation for its approval helps clarify the student's thinking about the proposed research and strengthens the student's ability to clearly describe the justification, method, and significance of the study to others. The prospectus is essentially the thesis minus the Results and Discussion sections and appendices containing data.

The prospectus also serves as a contract between the student and the advisory committee. It says in effect that if the student carries out the study as described and approved, the advisory committee will accept it no matter what it may find, when the thesis is written and formatted acceptably. The prospectus is also a description of the study to those who review it for Human Subjects concerns or to those who can grant access to subjects.

### **7.f.1. Prospectus meetings**

Multiple meetings of the advisory committee may be held. One of these meetings is designated as the prospectus defense. In this meeting, the student presents the prospectus and answers any questions about the study or the document. The student's goal is to convince the committee that the study is doable, important, and that the student knows what they are doing.

### **7.f.2. Prospectus defense scheduling**

A thesis prospectus defense meeting may be held as soon as the advisory committee agrees to hold one. Students should notify the ComD department secretary when a prospectus meeting is scheduled, who will publicize that information. After the advisory committee approves the prospectus, a signed copy of the revised form (attached) along with a paper copy of the completed prospectus should be turned in to the Graduate Coordinator, who will make sure that is placed in the student's file.

### **7.f.3. Recording prospectus completion**

After the prospectus defense, the student makes any necessary changes to the prospectus, obtains the approval signatures of committee members, and gives the form and a printed copy of the final prospectus to the Graduate Coordinator, who places these items in the student's folder in the ComD office. For progress evaluation, the prospectus is considered to be completed when so added to the student's file.

### **7.g. The thesis defense**

The thesis defense is a public meeting, scheduled through the Graduate School, in which the degree candidate presents the thesis and defends the thesis by answering questions about it. The thesis defense cannot be scheduled until a score on the NTE Praxis exam which meets the departmental "pass" level has been received by the ComD department.

#### **7.g.1. Scheduling the thesis defense**

The thesis defense is scheduled at least two weeks in advance by filling out Form 8c, the Departmental Scheduling of Final Oral Examination form available from the ComD secretaries, and obtaining the necessary signatures. The process involves:

1. The thesis chair decides that the thesis is ready for the other committee members to read.
2. The committee members are given at least 5 working days to read the thesis. Committee members typically suggest revisions or corrections. The student makes these changes in the thesis.
3. The thesis chair reads the corrected thesis and ascertains that it is in final form. The Departmental Scheduling of Final Oral Examination form (8c) specifies that for the thesis to be in satisfactory form its format, citations, and bibliographic style are consistent, acceptable, and fulfill university style requirements, and that its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place. Other than the format of the preliminary pages, the university has departments specify the style manual to be followed; ComD uses the APA Publication Manual (5th Ed.) with the exceptions or extensions listed above in this Handbook.
4. The date for the defense must be a time when the university is in session (i.e., during class or final exam days). The student works with the advisory committee to find a mutually acceptable date and time.
5. After insuring that the thesis meets all format and style expectations, the thesis chair gives a copy of the thesis to graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator examines the thesis and lets the thesis chair know if she or he can confirm that the thesis is in final form. If the graduate coordinator notes any format errors, the copy is returned to the student or the thesis chair. When the thesis is error free, the graduate coordinator notifies the thesis chair, places the copy in 136 TLRB as the departmental copy, and signs the scheduling form.  
In other words, the student is to write the thesis such that it conforms to all style and format requirements, and the thesis chair is to ascertain that all these style and format requirements have been met. The signature of the graduate coordinator confirms that this process has worked satisfactorily.
6. The signed Form and the paper copy of the thesis are given to the ComD secretary, who enters the form's information into the Graduate School computer system.

#### **7.g.2. Thesis defense tasks**

The committee specifies the manner in which the student presents the thesis. This may involve an oral narrative or a multimedia presentation. Committee members ask questions about the study and the thesis. When finished, the student and any observers are excused and the committee votes on the student's performance.

#### **7.g.3. Possible thesis defense outcomes**

The committee vote specifies one of four possible outcomes.

1. Pass: no changes are necessary; the thesis is accepted, signed, and copies made for the Library.
2. Pass with qualifications: The thesis needs minor changes. The committee chair holds up the results of the defense until the changes have been satisfactorily completed.
3. Recess: The thesis needs revision, further writing, or other fixing. Another defense is necessary but must be held at least one month later.
4. Fail: The student's degree program is terminated immediately.

#### **7.g.4. After the thesis defense**

The student takes the following steps after passing the thesis defense (including the making of any changes mandated by the committee):

1. The committee members sign Form 8d ("Department Approval...") if they have not already done so.
2. A print-out of the pdf version of the thesis is submitted to the ComD graduate coordinator. This version is

reviewed as to format and content. Corrections to the thesis might be specified; when the thesis has been corrected, the ComD graduate coordinator signs Form 8d.

3. The student takes Form 8d and a paper copy of the thesis pdf to the MSoE Dean's Office (301 MCKB). Obtain a cover sheet from the ComD secretary; the Dean's office has been known to lose or forget submitted theses. The Dean's Office is allowed up to 10 work days for this review. Corrections to the thesis might be specified at this level of review; if there are to be changes, the committee chair and the ComD graduate coordinator should also be notified. When the student has made any recommended changes, Form 8d is signed, and the pdf of the thesis is submitted through the Grad School process (see their web page regarding ETD submission). The thesis pdf is reviewed at the department and college level before being approved and sent to the library. The student submits Form 8d to the library.

## **8. Finishing the Degree**

### **8.a. The Comprehensive exam**

The comprehensive exam covers coursework in the major, both undergraduate and graduate, in both audiology and speech-language pathology and in allied areas like statistics. The purposes of the exam are: (a) to encourage review and study everything together, allowing new connections to be made and new insights to be gained; (b) to satisfy the faculty's need for some evidence of retention even after the classes have ended; and (c) to point out areas of possible weakness or shallowness.

#### **8.a.1. Passing score**

The ASHA NTE Praxis exam serves as the written comprehensive examination. The comprehensive exam is passed when the ComD department receives official notification (from NTE) of a student's score being at or above the national 75th percentile. This score level is printed on the Score report as the upper value of the middle 50% range. The exact passing score varies depending on the normative distribution for each administration of the exam. For the last two years, the 75th percentile has been met by a score of 700 in Speech-Language Pathology, however, the numeric score corresponding to the 75th percentile may change from test administration to test administration.

The department will also accept scores on the ETS Praxis exam as passing the comprehensive exam requirement which are not significantly lower than the 75th percentile. The term "not significantly lower" is defined as: a score which is less than one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) below the published 75th percentile score. Both the 75th percentile (i.e., the upper bound of the "Average Performance Range") score and the SEM for each test administration are published in the *Understanding Your Praxis Scores* booklet.

For example, on the 2003-2004 Edition booklet page 22, the 75th percentile score for a student taking the Speech-Language Pathology exam was 700, and the SEM was 25. The ComD department would accept scores as 680 and 690 as passing the departmental comprehensive exam requirement, as these scores are (defined as being) not significantly lower than the 75th percentile score of 700. A score of 670, however, would be more than one SEM below the 75th percentile and would not be accepted to be a passing score on the comprehensive exam, missing the 75th percentile by 30 points. The percentile and SEM data applicable to each particular ETS Praxis test administration will be used to interpret scores from that administration.

Note the following ETS policy: If you pass the Praxis exam at ASHA's level, and are pre-enrolled for the subsequent administration, ETS will disenroll you and refund your fee. This means that if you pass at ASHA's level but not BYU's level, you will have to try to re-enroll in the subsequent administration or face a longer delay in re-taking the exam.

Infrequently, technical problems occur in NTE/Praxis test administration or score reporting. These problems must be handled between the student and NTE; the ComD department will not become involved nor will the department attempt to adjust passing score levels. For example, a student may request from NTE a rescoring of their exam. Students should take the exam early enough that they can have a 75th or higher percentile score received by the ASLP department from NTE prior to the university deadline for graduation. The student is responsible to see that an official passing score is received by the department. Students who are unable to pass the exam at the department-specified level may have their degree progress classified as unsatisfactory.

### **8.a.2. Resources to assist students**

The ComD department has acquired several resources to assist graduate students in preparing to take the NTE/Praxis Speech-Language Pathology exam which serves as the departmental comprehensive exam. Books can be checked out from the Materials Room (156 TLRB).

A. Roseberry-McKibbin, C., & Hegde, M. N. (2000). An advanced review of speech-language pathology: Preparation for NESPA and comprehensive examination. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

B. Payne, K. T. (2000). How to prepare for the Praxis examination in speech-language pathology (2nd Ed.). San Diego, CA: Singular-Thompson Learning.

### **8.b. The Exit Interview**

Each student must have an exit interview with the department chair. This interview is scheduled in advance of the graduation deadline (but after completion of the thesis defense) to allow a review of the student's file, including checking of clinical requirement completion. The department chair also asks about the quality and appropriateness of the student's graduate experience and gathers suggestions from the student.

### **8.c. Graduation ceremonies**

Students who have completed all degree requirements 10 or more days prior to the graduation ceremony may walk in the McKay School of Education Convocation and have their name read even if they have not met the university deadline for graduation that semester.

Everything must be done by the last day of the semester (which includes Graduation day) when you finish, including pdf approved and submitted to the library, or you'll have to pay for registration in the subsequent semester.

### **8.d. Current Ecclesiastical Endorsement**

A student's ecclesiastical endorsement must be current throughout their program. Note that if graduation is delayed, an additional endorsement might need to be filed to remain current.

## **9. Resources and other concerns**

### **9.a. How long records are kept**

Student files are archived indefinitely. Student files older than 8 years will not be reviewed for certification compliance; however, former students may request copies of non-confidential information in their file. A fee may be charged for this.

### **9.b. Faculty access and availability**

Faculty are typically under contract for Fall and Winter Semesters and for Spring Term. Faculty should advise their thesis students of longer (one week or more) planned absences. Students must take faculty availability into account in planning and scheduling.

### **9.c. Student mail boxes**

Mailboxes are provided in the hall across from room 111 TLRB. Students should not leave valuables or any confidential material in these mailboxes as the hall is open to the public.

### **9.d. Computer and network access**

Computer resources are provided by the university; a computer lab with web access is in room 178 TLRB. Each student is also given an email account on Route Y by the university.

### **9.e. Lab access and TLRB access**

Access to labs is gained through ComD faculty; the ComD secretary can provide passes which are required for after-hours and Saturday presence in the Taylor building.

### **9.f. Student Organizations and Representation**

NSSLHA, the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, is the student branch of ASHA.

Typically pronounced as "nish-luh", it exists both at a national level and as a local chapter at BYU. Membership in the national NSSLHA currently costs about \$60 and includes on-line access to all ASHA journals as well as a discount on the cost of joining ASHA. NSSLHA membership also allows a reduced price on registration for the annual ASHA national convention, access to a job placement service, etc. Members of the local NSSLHA chapter elect a president, who is invited to attend ComD faculty meetings, where they get information, present concerns, advise the faculty, etc.

One graduate student is elected by graduate student peers to attend faculty meetings to represent the graduate students in the same way the NSSLHA president represents students. This election process is carried out by the graduate coordinator. Students are also encouraged to participate in the BYU Graduate Student Society (GSS), which unites and assists graduate students throughout the university, publishes a newsletter, and sponsors graduate student social events, student travel awards, and other workshops and speakers throughout the year. The GSS can be reached at: [www.byu.edu/gss](http://www.byu.edu/gss)

### **9.g. Graduate Student Input**

The ComD department actively solicits graduate student input; such input is the primary function of the graduate student representative. Students may also make suggestions (orally or in writing, anonymously if desired) to the department chair or graduate coordinator. Each student is also asked for feedback and suggestions as part of the exit interview. Student suggestions are discussed in faculty meetings and will be implemented when they will improve the quality of the graduate program.

### **9.h. Grievances**

Concerns or grievances may be general (i.e., changes needed in the curriculum, policies, etc.) pertaining to all students, or they may be specific to a student, or exist between a student and faculty member. General concerns should be voiced to the graduate student representative (or the NSSLHA president), who may present the issue in ComD faculty meeting.

Specific concerns should first be discussed with the faculty member involved, in accordance with Matthew 18:15 and Doctrine and Covenants 42:88. If no resolution is obtained, the student and faculty member should have a joint meeting with Dr. McPherson, the ComD department chair. Grievances dealing with termination will be handled by Dr. McPherson, the Dean of the School of Education, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Students may also contact the CAA, the accrediting affiliate of ASHA. The address of the CAA is: Council on Academic Accreditation, 2000 Research Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland 20850-3289.

### **9.i. Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity receiving federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to a professor or the department chair, contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours), or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

### **9.j. Students With Disabilities**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete a course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and course instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, located in D-382 ASB.

### **9.k. Equitable Treatment Statement**

In our clinic, services are provided on equitable basis without regard to gender, sexual orientation, age, race, creed, national origin, or disability.

