

2009-10 Communication Disorders (ComD) at BYU Undergraduate Handbook

Overview

This handbook aims to tell you all the important things about majoring in the Department of Communication Disorders (ComD) at BYU. The department name changed from Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (ASLP) to ComD in 2006. Herein are what we hope are clear, accurate, honest answers to frequently asked questions. Please let us know if there are other things we should include, or if something doesn't seem clear, accurate, or honest.

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Getting Into the Major

• What is the major in ComD all about?

Choosing to major in ComD means that you are genuinely interested in learning all you can about how to help persons with hearing, speech, and language disorders. The goal of the ComD faculty is for you to become educated. Becoming educated means knowing academic material to the depth that you can make practical application of that material with clients. Our goal is to have you gain the basis for becoming an exemplary professional to whom we could refer our own parent or child, rather than have you merely take courses, pass exams, and get grades.

• What can I do with a bachelor's degree in ComD?

The bachelor's degree in ComD gives you a good introductory grounding in the normal anatomy and processes of language, speech, and hearing, and an introduction to disorders, instrumentation, and data collection procedures in these areas. Thus, in conjunction with General Education coursework, a major in ComD is a "liberal arts" degree. Typically, earning a bachelor's degree in ComD allows you to apply for admission to a graduate degree program in either audiology or speech-language pathology. A master's degree in SLP is required for national certification, for state licensure, and for public school licensure in almost every state. Audiology requires a doctorate in audiology, a degree which is not offered at BYU.

• What can't I do with a major in ComD?

You can't teach school, do surgery, counsel people with personality or social problems, or prescribe medication. In fact, you can't legally be an audiologist or a speech-language pathologist, until you complete a master's degree in the major, including clinical requirements. You can't be a "teacher of the deaf"; that is a separate major, one which is not offered at BYU.

• How do I change my major to ComD?

The Education Advisement Center (120 MCKB) staff members work with undergraduate students in ComD. Declaring ComD as a major is done by working with them to get entered into the computerized record system. They will also meet with you periodically to make sure that you are making progress toward completing degree requirements, and you may meet with them whenever you need to discuss General Education or other graduation requirements, or other issues related to earning an honorable exit from BYU.

• Where can I learn more about the ComD professions?

One source is the ComD 133 course, *Introduction to Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology*. This web-based course surveys the breadth of these two fields, explores their interconnection, and offers glimpses into clinical practice.

A second source is visiting www.asha.org, the website of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. This site discusses professional issues and contains job ads, reviews of books and materials, clinical and legal requirements state-by-state, government issues, etc.

Completing the Major

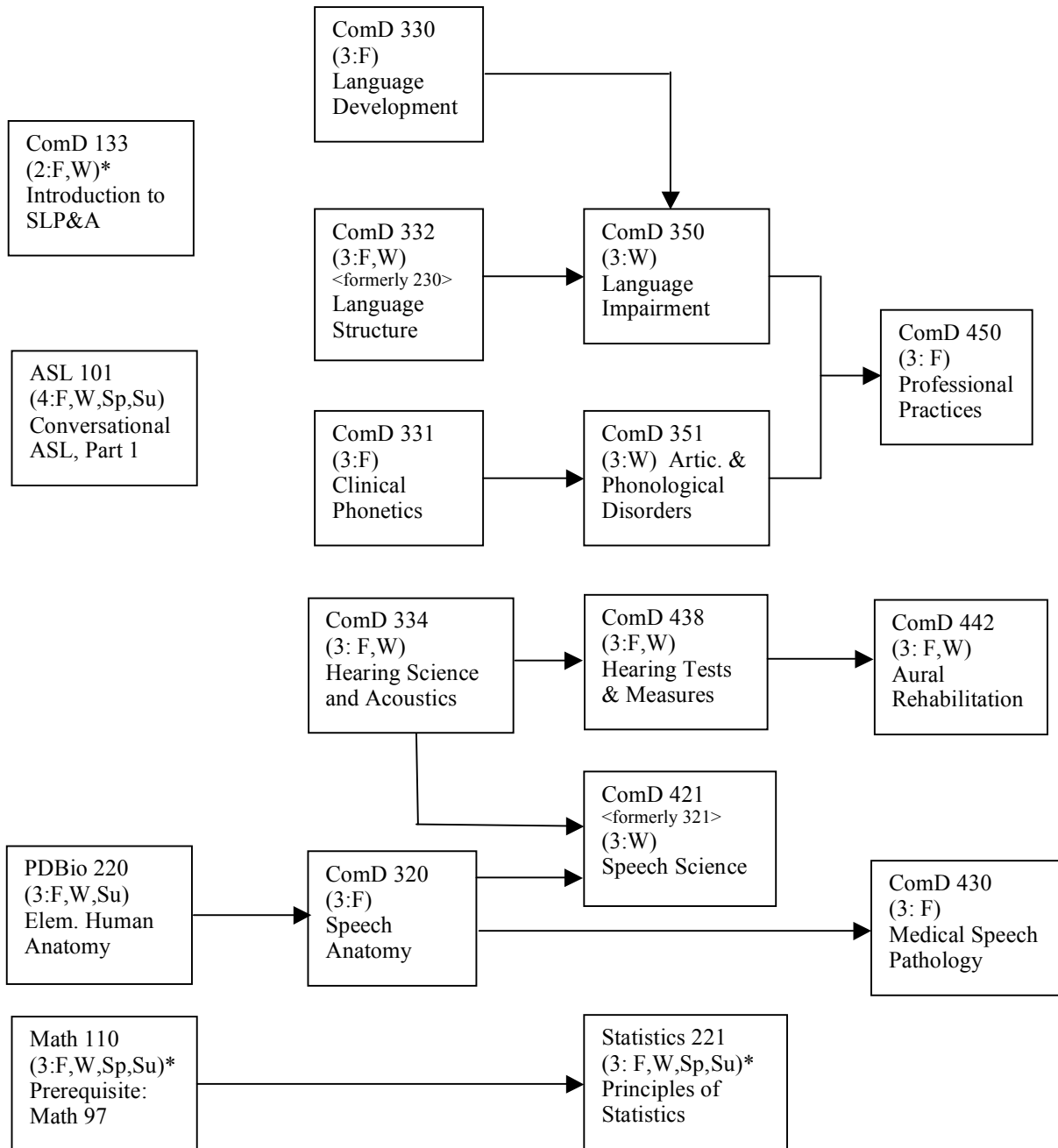
Completing the undergraduate major means taking all the required courses. At present, no additional requirements (senior thesis, comprehensive exam, minor, etc.) are required.

• Which classes must I take?

All students take: ASL 101, Math 110, Stat 221, PDBio 220,

ComD 133, 320, 330, 331, 332 (formerly 230), 334, 350, 351, 421 (formerly 321), 430, 438, 442, 450.

• Courses and Pre-requisites flowchart



Required prerequisites are indicated by solid lines coming into the left side of a course's box. Recommended prerequisites are indicated by dashed lines. All courses are required.

* Course also offered through Independent Study (elearn.byu.edu)

• I'm a transfer student: which classes should I take? Or, I want to take my last ComD classes at another university and transfer them back to graduate from BYU; how do I do this?

You need to take all the required classes in the major at BYU, unless you convince the faculty that the class

you took or will take elsewhere has the same level of breadth, depth, and rigor as the equivalent BYU class. No more than 6 semester hours of classes taught in the ComD department can be substituted for by transfer classes. To initiate this review, give the BYU faculty member who teaches the class that you want the transfer class substituted for enough information (catalog description, syllabus, etc.) that they can make a judgment and write a memo stating equivalence. Then give this memo to Dr. McPherson or Dr. Channell, who will write a memo to the Education Advisement Center (EAC) which will then be put in your file. When you have passed the class and have it officially transferred back to BYU, notify the EAC that you have passed this substitute class, and they will waive the BYU ComD class.

• **Can I skip the prerequisites for certain classes?**

Basically, no. To aid in "streamlining" graduation requirements, the faculty have only made prerequisites to courses when skipping such a prerequisite will affect your performance (i.e., your grade) for the course. Faculty will not tutor you on prerequisite material, nor adjust your grade in light of not having the prerequisite.

• **Which semesters are certain courses offered?**

The plan for course availability by semester is as follows; though we try to minimize changes, this information is subject to change. All courses are ComD department offerings unless indicated. Classes marked with an asterisk have a prerequisite; see the list of courses above. Credit hours are in parentheses.

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
asl 101 (4)	asl 101 (4)	asl 101 (4)	asl 101 (4)
m.110 (3)	m.110 (3)	m.110 (3)	m.110 (3)
pdb.220 (3)	pdb.220 (3)	*st.221 (3)	pdb.220 (3)
*st.221 (3)	*st.221 (3)		*st.221 (3)
133 (2)	133 (2)		
*320 (3)	332 (3)		
330 (3)	334 (3)		
331 (3)	*350 (3)		
332 (3)	*351 (3)		
334 (3)	*421 (3)		
*430 (3)	*438 (3)		
*438 (3)	*442 (3)		
*442 (3)			
*450 (3)			

• **Which electives would help me as an ComD major?**

Audiology and speech-language pathology are multi-disciplinary fields, building on theories, methods, and findings from psychology, linguistics, physiology/neurology/medicine, acoustics, electrical engineering and technology, education, statistics, and philosophy.

If you are aiming toward a career working with children, coursework in special ed., reading/language arts, learning disabilities, and child development could be a good investment. For working with adults, courses in neurology, gerontology or aging, and clinical psych would be useful.

• **I'm going to be a junior: what sequence of classes should I take to graduate on time?**

Junior Year:			Senior Year	
Summer	Fall	Winter	Fall	Winter
pdb.220 (3)	320 (3)	133 (2)	430 (3)	421 (3)
	330 (3)	350 (3)	438 (3)	442 (3)
	331 (3)	351 (3)	450 (3)	st.221 (3)
	332 (3)	334 (3)	m.110 (3)	asl 101 (4)

To do the major in two years, you need to have taken PDBio 220 before Fall of the Junior year. This plan also assumes you have already taken high school algebra (or Math 97). If you are rusty or insecure about algebra, take Math 97 the semester or term before Math 110.

• **What about General Education (GE) classes?**

The choice of classes taken to fulfill University GE requirements is left to the student. Some ComD-major required courses also fill certain GE requirements; prudent planning can thus save time toward graduation. Any GE Advanced Writing class is acceptable for ComD majors. Because ComD ties into so many other fields, the faculty view GE courses as an important adjunct to courses in the major. We wish that all students could complete the foreign language GE requirement as well as filling the advanced math/statistics courses that we require.

• **Where are ComD books kept in the Library?**

ComD books are found on the first, second, third, and fifth floor of the Harold B. Lee Library. Also, in electronic reference searching, try both social sciences (first floor), life sciences (second floor), and humanities (fifth floor).

• **Which things does the Education Advisement Center (EAC) in 120 MCKB do?**

- (1) The EAC enters you into the computer as an official major or minor
- (2) offers advisement on meeting general and religious education requirements
- (3) monitors your progress toward graduation
- (4) handles exceptions and academic/administrative problems (if any)
- (5) maintains your permanent graduation file and approves your graduation
- (6) provides scholarship application information and forms
- (7) gives official BYU endorsement for public school certification to state agencies.

• **What are the professional organizations in ComD?**

The two main societies are ASHA and, for students, NSSLHA; audiologists have lately been getting more into the American Academy of Audiology (AAA). The local branch of ASHA in Utah is USHA. USHA sponsors one or two state conferences per year and works on professional and legal issues in the state. AAA sponsors a national convention and other resources for audiologists including a website: www.audiology.org; ask an Audiology faculty member for more information. ASHA also sponsors a web site: www.asha.org and several special interest groups

• **What is ASHA, what are its benefits, and when can I join?**

ASHA is the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. ASHA handles the national certification effort, works with states to set professional standards, publishes journals containing research in speech, language, and hearing and their disorders, sponsors a national convention (useful for papers presented and products displayed), and sponsors other workshops and information dissemination efforts. Persons who complete a master's degree, including specified coursework and clinical practica, a supervised, paid first-year on the job (the Clinical Fellowship Year), and pass a long multiple-choice test are eligible to join ASHA and receive national certification (the Certificate of Clinical Competence, also called the CCC). For your dues, you receive 2 of the 5 ASHA journals, remain certified, vote for officers, and other benefits.

• **Will my courses count toward meeting ASHA's KASA requirements?**

If you earn a grade of B- or higher in a course, the department will accept this performance as indicating that you have met the Knowledge and Skill ("KASA") standards for that course. If you go to graduate school elsewhere, the department will inform that school of this if asked.

• **What is NSSLHA, what are its benefits, and when should I join?**

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 costs around \$45 and gives you subscriptions to one ASHA journal as well as a discount on the cost of joining ASHA, which you will want to do if you stay in the field. NSSLHA membership also gets you a reduced price on registration for the annual ASHA national convention, access to a job placement service, etc.

The local chapter of NSSLHA sponsors guest speakers, service projects, and social events. Typically, membership in the local chapter costs about \$10 per year. The NSSLHA president is invited to ComD faculty meetings.

• **When do I get to work with clients?**

Only graduate students will receive supervised clinical practicum hours in speech and language. The reason we deleted undergraduate practicum was a shortage of qualified part-time supervisors.

• **What are observation hours and how are they handled in the department?**

Observation hours are time spent watching therapy in the company of someone who holds the CCC from ASHA. These hours are an important part of clinical training, and 25 such hours are required for ASHA clinical certification. Observation hours are not required for graduation from BYU, nor is the department obligated to help you earn them. Occasionally you will view videotapes in ComD classes for which the instructor will sign observation hours at the end of the semester. Any person holding the CCC can sign for observation hours, but the person signing must have been present during the observation. You are responsible to keep a log of your observation hours and the signatures to eventually submit to ASHA. You can get a form for recording the hours and signatures from the ComD department secretary (in 136 TLRB). The ComD department DOES NOT keep any record of observation hours and will not obtain signatures for hours after you have left BYU. If you are admitted to graduate study at BYU, you should work with the SLP clinic director to complete the observation hours requirement before starting to see clients.

• **Who was Dr. Alonzo J. Morley?**

Dr. Alonzo J. Morley (1903-1995) was one of the earliest PhD degree recipients in speech pathology and was the first speech pathologist to join the faculty at BYU. Aside from starting BYU's speech pathology program and the speech and hearing clinic, he was involved in the dramatic arts and in community service.

• **Is the John Taylor building a safe place?**

The Taylor building houses the Clinical Psychology program (among others) and so clients with a wide variety of emotional and sexual disorders pass through or wander around on their way to the clinics upstairs.

• **Is there any financial aid available to BYU ComD undergraduates?**

Yes. ComD majors are eligible for a number of scholarships through the McKay School of Education. Information on these is obtained from the Education Advisement Office (120 MCKB). If you have any well-to-do relatives, you might drop a hint for a marvelous, tax-deductible opportunity in that regard.

• **How do I get back and forth between main campus and the John Taylor building without being maimed or killed on 900 East Street?**

Your best bet is to always cross 900 East inside a car, preferably one with airbags. Your next best bet is to cross that street at the light at 1200 North, cutting along the north edge of the Law School to reach the main campus. Bring some light reading, as the 900 East traffic light is typically set to largely ignore east-west traffic.

Classes, Faculty, Planning Ahead

• Help: I'm doing poorly in a class. What should I do?

There are several reasons why students do poorly in classes. Some of the main reasons are:

a. *The student is in the wrong field.* Success in any major is a combination of pre-existing skills or abilities combined with work at the new learning tasks. Students who have never studied music probably won't be able to succeed as a music major; students who find math challenging will probably not make it through as electrical engineering majors. The skills needed for success in ComD are perhaps less obvious, but would include generally good-but-not-excellent abilities at math, language, biology, science in general, and both writing and public speaking. Many if not most of our students seem to have shown unusual skill or motivation at foreign language learning, music, or organizing humanitarian service projects. Successful clinicians in our field have above-average interpersonal communication skills. They are comfortable --and good at-- talking and having conversations.

b. *The student is generally capable in the major but one area of the field is perceived as difficult or repulsive.* Success in ComD means being able to do well in several fields: students learn principles of acoustics, anatomy, audiology, embryology, genetics, linguistics, medicine, psychology, neurology, statistics, rehabilitation, gerontology and even philosophy. Some students tend to lean toward speech science and anatomy, others toward child language, others toward adult neurological; however, a student must do "good" work in all areas as well as doing outstanding work in a favorite area. Students must be able to be able to look analytically at language, speech, and hearing; breaking each of these processes into components and grasping how the components work together for communication. The ComD bachelor's and master's degrees are like your "general education" in the field; specialization is typical only in doctoral programs. If this idea fills you with dread, perhaps you need a narrower major that allows you to go more in depth in a selected area.

Sometimes, the student just doesn't have the background in a particular area, like math. The solution here is to bite the bullet and take courses that you need (such as Math 97), even if they are not explicitly required and you want to see yourself as more advanced.

c. *The exams don't seem to measure the material covered in the lectures and the text(s).* Instructors vary in their teaching and testing abilities, and some teaching or testing styles appeal to some students and not to others. This diversity will be seen later in how hard or easy it is to please certain supervisors or clients in the workplace. The small number of ComD faculty limits the amount of choice available regarding instructors. This becomes a real barrier to progress when the student chooses to blame the teacher for the student's poor accomplishment, rather than thinking of each instructor as a new language to learn to speak.

d. *The student is trying to lead a normal life and still do well in classes.* Well, sorry, not every student can do that. School, especially in a chillingly competitive climate as BYU is becoming, has to come first. (Actually, being a good person comes first; school comes second.) Roommates, dating partners, etc. come lower on the list, if you want to do well enough to have options for graduate study. Even a spouse needs to sacrifice some time with you toward letting you do well.

e. *Outside factors (health, job, church calling, social) diminish time and motivation to study.* Some of these factors are beyond your control, others aren't. Either way, you need time and concentration to learn the material in the classes, and if you can't free it up, you'll need to settle for lower grades and fewer eventual options. The ComD faculty would rather have you take longer to graduate and do better, but sometimes that isn't possible in your circumstances. The standards won't be lowered just because you have faced extra challenges. You have to decide if achievement levels given what you can invest are really worth it to you.

f. *The student is lazy or spoiled or distracted or undisciplined and can't coast through ComD classes like they did in high school or junior college classes.* Here at BYU you are surrounded by and competing with other people who were also able to coast through high school. Perhaps the most chilling realization you'll come to is that some of them didn't coast, even though they are as smart as you or even smarter. Other people learned good work habits and though you might have possessed more raw ability, they end up passing you by, in a tortoise-like manner. The solution here is to bite the bullet and pay the price, remedially learning self-denial. You might visit the Counseling and Career Center in room 2500 of the Wilkinson Student Center (WSC) for help on study skills.

Not to name any names, but some of the faculty started their academic careers in a manner that would be best described as... (ahem) quite undistinguished. The faculty know that some people are later-bloomers in terms of self-discipline, and though they base course grades on performance, complete turn-arounds are

respected and can help to balance out earlier mediocre work when getting recommendations for graduate school. Of course, self-proclaimed turn-arounds don't help much if at all.

g. The student's mind has been darkened by sin. This result typically grows out of a lack of testimony or a lack of self discipline, and usually both. Carrying around major unconfessed transgressions, persisting in transgression or in fantasy about transgression deprives you of the help of the spirit both in your academic work and in your life at large. It consumes much of your mental energy and hope. You may try to compartmentalize your life, so that by not thinking about your shame and guilt, you can still perform the outward behaviors associated with success; but this strategy leads to a shallowness which festers and eats you hollow over time.

• **Can I work clinically before earning a master's degree?**

You cannot legally or ethically work as an audiologist or a speech language pathologist before earning a master's degree. Working as a speech aide is only legal under the direct supervision of a licensed Audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist, meaning they are present at all times. It is only ethical to provide services when you are competent to do so.

• **How are grievances handled in the department?**

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 may be voiced to any graduate faculty member, to the ComD Department chair, or through the NSSLHA president who may present the issue in 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. If Dr. McPherson cannot resolve the problem, he will involve the School of Education Dean, and so on up the hierarchy as needed. Students may also contact the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA), the accrediting affiliate of ASHA. The address of the CAA is: Council on Academic Accreditation, 2000 Research Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland 20850-3289.

• **How can I interact more with faculty outside of class?**

Here are a few ways that students can become more acquainted with faculty outside the classroom.

- (a) Several times each semester the local student group (NSSLHA) sets up "brown bag" lunch sessions where students may chat with a faculty member.
- (b) NSSLHA sets up evening activities (often called "Nish nites") where students and faculty meet, for example, to tour faculty labs, learn about research options, and get to know faculty.
- (c) NSSLHA also organizes socials to which faculty are invited. Faculty really go to chat with students, but may lapse into talking with each other rather than just standing around. If you see two or more faculty talking together at a NSSLHA social, it is okay to join the group and introduce yourself.
- (d) Most faculty members keep regular office hours, and all faculty members meet with students by appointment. Make an appointment or drop in during office hours to introduce yourself, ask questions, share comments about class, etc.

• **Should I become involved in research, and how do I do so?**

Perhaps. If you get involved in faculty research and do well, it will strengthen your application for graduate admission, at BYU or elsewhere. However, if you are not able to give it 100%, or it turns out to be over your head, it will harm your application.

Read the faculty publications; Faculty vitae and recent theses are on the department web site. Volunteer as a research subject whenever possible. Show initiative in learning what faculty are doing; if that work is intriguing to you decide if you have the time and energy to volunteer. Money may be available from a faculty member's grant or through the Mentored Undergraduate Research (MUR) program.

Graduate School and After Graduation

• **What career options other than ComD are possible for ComD majors?**

A major in ComD is a solid liberal arts degree emphasizing human communication and connections between the physical & biological sciences and the behavioral sciences and humanities. If you look not to be heading to grad school, invest in the BYU Placement Center, insist they treat you as a liberal arts major ("like communications or English non-teaching"), and let them help you find a pleasing career path.

Three related master's programs at BYU are worth considering: the Master's in Public Administration (through the Marriott School of Management), the TESOL program (Linguistics dept.), and Special Ed (post-bachelor's certification in mild/moderate or severe/profound or master's program; see Dr. Dyches in the CPSE department).

A bachelor's degree in ComD might be a good pre-law degree, if you took Philosophy 205, a couple other Philosophy classes, and an LSAT prep class. It would also be a good pre-MPA degree; plan to squeeze in a couple Economics classes and a GMAT prep class. It is not a good pre-med degree, unless you start early in the pre-med program and take all the chemistry, etc. required for medical school.

• **How do I get into graduate school?**

Get excellent grades, do well on the GRE, become known in unobtrusive and respectable ways by the faculty (i.e., don't be a whiner), get strong, supportive letters of recommendation, and file all application materials on time.

• **How do I get letters of recommendation?**

Ask faculty members who know you and in whose classes you have done the best. It doesn't matter if they can't remember your name and academic history offhand. Allow them 2-3 weeks of lead time, and give them stamped, addressed envelopes along with the forms. Most faculty prefer and some require a short resume containing grades in courses and favorable things they might mention. Waiving the "right of access" tends to give the recipient of a recommendation letter more confidence in its accuracy (and even if you don't waive access, you can only have access to the letter if you are admitted to and attend that school).

• **How do I take the GRE?**

This exam is offered through the Sylvan Learning Centers; the BYU testing center office or the Counseling & Career center (2590 WSC) can give you details. It is probably worth it to buy a "How to prepare for the GRE book" with practice software at the BYU bookstore (upstairs). Taking (\$\$) a minicourse might help you get a higher score.

Can I get into the ComD master's program (which covers speech-language pathology) at BYU?

It depends on your grades, your GRE score, and your image as perceived by the faculty as to whether you will do a good thesis, apply "book learning" to clinical and research problems, and can acquire strong clinical skills. Every applicant is considered as an individual first; outstanding promise or performance in one area may diminish minor gaps in some other area. Over the last 5 years, most of those admitted had GRE (V+Q) scores over 1100 and last 60 semesters hours' GPAs of 3.6 or higher. The likelihood of your admission depends on the qualifications of that year's other applicants. A program profile, describing graduate admissions and completion statistics, is on-line at:

<http://education.byu.edu/comd/documents/GraduateProgramProfiles.pdf>

Is it worth repeating classes to raise the grade?

It depends. If you were ill or severely distracted, and did poorly because you missed carrying out the preparations of which you are capable, then yes. If you worked hard (or as hard as you will work on the repeat) then no. Unless you raise a grade dramatically and to the top, like from a "C" to an "A," it won't help your overall image. For example, raising a "D" to a "C+" won't impress people, and raising an "A-" to an "A" will only prompt questions about your mental health. Repeating the class and getting the same grade (or lower) will harm your chances for graduate admission. Faculty want graduate students who will do well in graduate classes and clinical assignments the first time taken. But we understand that some grades do not accurately reflect an individual's overall fitness for graduate admission.

What about SLP master's programs other than at BYU?

They exist and vary in quality and competitiveness. There are enough SLP graduate programs that students with a B+ average (3.4 on the last 60 hours) or better can usually get in somewhere. Graduate programs in Audiology are generally less difficult to get into than SLP programs. In our field, getting a bachelor's and master's from the same school has no stigma to it, as the two degrees together constitute a general education in the field. Changing schools gives you a more diverse perspective, but you may have to backtrack and take a few extra courses.

• The ComD Minor

How can I earn a minor in ComD?

To have a minor noted on your transcript and diploma, you need to declare it through the Education Advisement Center (EAC), located in 120 MCKB.

The requirements for a minor are to take ComD 133 and 14 additional hours of ComD courses. Prerequisites for courses must be observed. An ComD minor DOES NOT qualify you to work as an audiologist or as a speech-language clinician or therapist, even in a preschool.

• Legal Issues

Honor Code Standards

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact **be** your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440 WSC).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in a course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

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.