

## 2016 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. Herein are what we hope are clear and accurate answers to frequently asked questions. Please let us know if there are other things we should include, or if something doesn't seem clear or accurate.

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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, so you can make practical application of that material with clients. We assume that you are planning a career in speech-language pathology (SLP) or audiology and that you realize that you'll need a master's degree (SLP) or doctorate (audiology) to fully participate in these fields. The bachelor's degree major in ComD aims to prepare you well for graduate study, whether here at BYU or at another fine university. Our goal is to have you start to become 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. Indeed, as we get older, we realize more and more that we might be training our own therapist, and thus we want you to become as good as possible both in terms of academic knowledge and of attitudes like caring and diligence.

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

A major in ComD is a solid liberal arts degree emphasizing human communication and connections between the physical and biological sciences and the behavioral sciences and humanities. 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 speech-language pathology or a doctorate in audiology, 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 undergraduate major in Communication Disorders (ComD) is a Limited Enrollment Program (LEP). One hundred students will be admitted to the major each year. Any student may declare Pre-ComD as a major, but all prospective majors need to apply for admission to the ComD major. When you have completed all three of the prerequisite classes: ComD 133, Stat 121, and PDBio 220, you may apply to the major by filling out an "Application for Admission to the ComD Major" form. You may also submit the form during the semester that you are enrolled in the last prerequisite class(es); we'll fill in the grade(s) when available. A copy of the application form is provided as the last page of this handbook.

You submit the application form to the ComD department office (136 TLRB). Your application will be reviewed at the next undergraduate admissions meeting. These meetings are held three times per year: September 1st, January 1st, and May 1st. Admission will be based on the grade point average in the three prerequisite classes. If you are not admitted to the major, each of the three prerequisite classes may be repeated only once, and you may re-apply. We advise a student who is turned down twice for admission to the ComD major to consider an alternate major.

- **Where can I learn more about the ComD professions?**

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

A second source is visiting [www.asha.org](http://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.

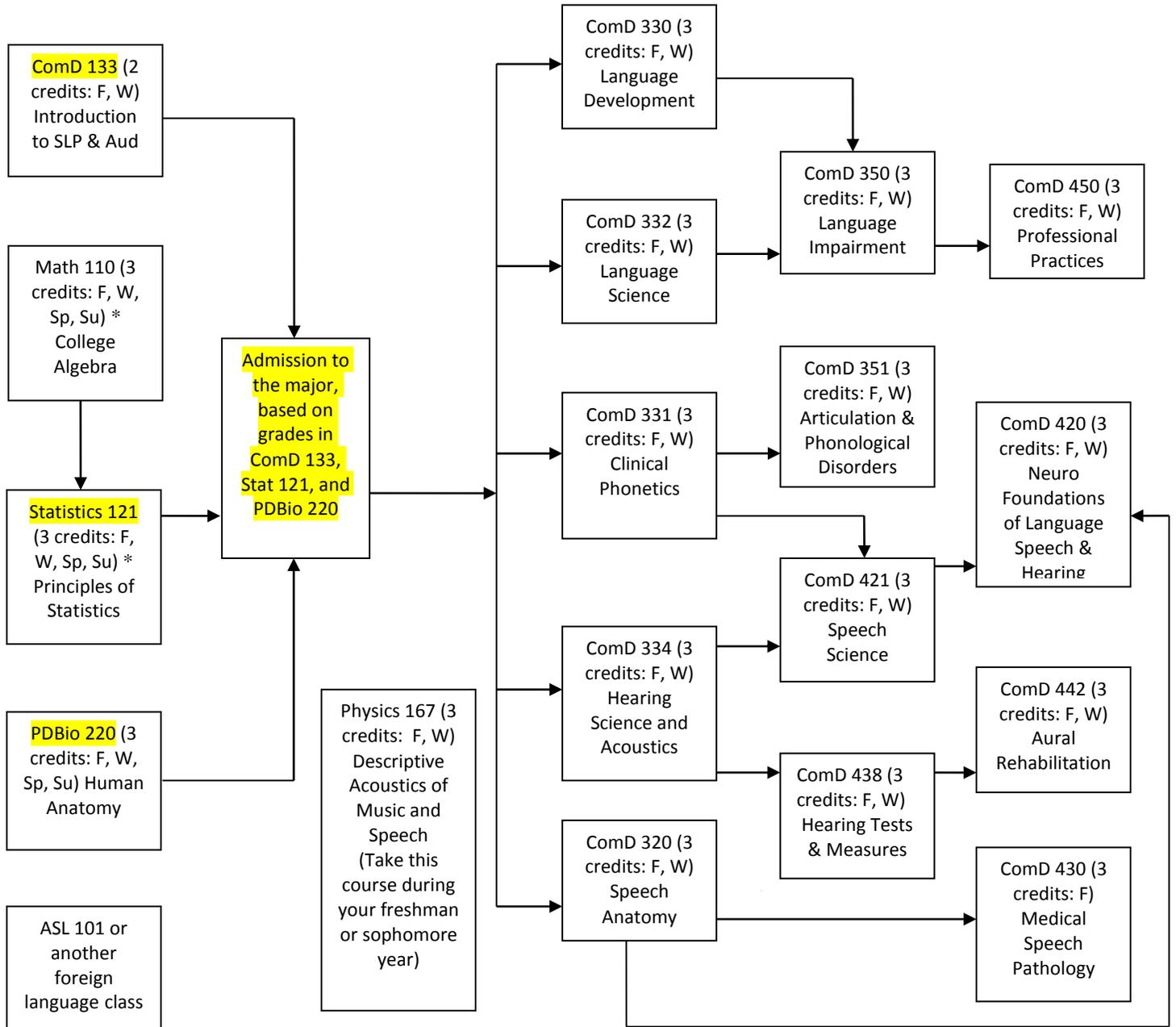
- **Which classes must I take?**

All students take: Math 110, Stat 121, PDBio 220, ComD 133 then apply for the major. After admission to the major students will take 320, 330, 331, 332, 334, 350, 351, 420, 421, 430, 438, 442, 450, Physics 167, and either ASL 101 or another university-level foreign language 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.

• **Courses and Prerequisites flowchart**



Required prerequisites are indicated by solid lines coming into the left side of a course's box. 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 demonstrate to 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. As a BYU student, 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. Fujiki or Dr. Blair, 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 an official transcript noting this sent to BYU, notify the EAC that you have passed this substitute class, and they will waive the BYU ComD class.

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

Course availability by semester is shown on the flowchart above in parentheses next to the credit hour specification for each course. Each course (except 430) is offered both Fall and Winter semesters. No ComD classes are available Spring/Summer terms.

- **Beyond the ComD major classes, which classes should I take as an undergraduate toward meeting the 2014 ASHA standards?**

The ASHA standards implemented in 2014 specify that "...the applicant must have demonstrated knowledge of the biological sciences, physical sciences, statistics, and the social/behavioral sciences." Two of the prerequisites to the ComD major (PDBio 220 and Stat 121) help toward meeting this standard.

The implementation language about this standard says "Acceptable courses in physical sciences should include physics or chemistry." In the physical science area, we suggest that students take a course such as Physics 105/7 (General Physics I with lab), Chemistry 101 (Elementary College Chemistry), Chemistry 102 (Introductory General Chemistry), Chemistry 103 (Concepts of Chemistry) or Chemistry 105 (General College Chemistry; note: Chemistry 105 is a very challenging class).

The ASHA standard's implementation language also says "Acceptable courses in social/behavioral sciences should include psychology, sociology, anthropology, or public health." In this area there are more options, but we would suggest either Anthropology 101 (Social/Cultural Anthropology), Psychology 111 (General Psychology), SFL 201 (Human Development), or Sociology 111 (Introductory Sociology), all of which currently meet BYU's University Core Social Science requirement.

- **Which other electives might help me as a ComD major?**

Audiology and speech-language pathology are multi-disciplinary fields, building on theories, methods, and research from psychology, human development, 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 education, 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.

- **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 floor (with social sciences and education), second floor (with life sciences and clinical ComD), and fifth floor (linguistics) of the Harold B. Lee Library.

- **Which things does the Education Student Services (ESS) office in 350 MCKB do?**

- (1) The ESS 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 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. In speech-language pathology, 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 on-line access to the ASHA journals, remain certified, vote for officers, and other benefits. ASHA also sponsors a web site: [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) and several special interest groups.

- **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 \$60 and gives you on-line access to the ASHA journals 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. Membership in the local chapter costs about \$10 per year. The NSSLHA president is invited to ComD faculty meetings.

- **What are some of the other professional organizations in ComD?**

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.

Many audiologists are affiliated with the American Academy of Audiology (AAA). AAA sponsors a

national convention and other resources for audiologists including a website: [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org); ask an Audiology faculty member for more information.

- **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 Skills Acquisition ("KASA") standards for that course. If you go to graduate school elsewhere, the department will inform that school of this if asked.

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

Only graduate students will receive supervised clinical practicum hours in speech and language. Undergraduates may participate in some research projects that involve working with children or adults in clinical or educational settings. Also, NSSLHA may assist with evening activities for children, such as a Halloween or spring carnival.

- **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 can 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. In addition to 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 ("TLRB") a safe place?**

The Taylor building is generally safe; however, the TLRB houses the Clinical Psychology program (among others), and so clients with a wide variety of challenges 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 ESS Office (350 MCKB).

## 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 abilities at math, language, biology, science in general, and both writing and communication. Many 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.* 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 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 skills, 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 work with 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 distracted.* School, especially in a competitive climate as BYU is becoming, has to be a high priority. Students must be willing to devote the time and effort needed to do well in challenging classes and assignments. This may require a level of commitment to which a student is not accustomed. Sometimes even *good* things (such as skiing or hanging out with roommates) have to be limited to achieve *better* things. The solution here is to bite the bullet and pay the price, remedially learning self-discipline. You might visit the Counseling and Career Center in room 2500 of the Wilkinson Student Center (WSC) for help on study skills.

The faculty know that some people are later-bloomers in terms of focus and 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.

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

You cannot legally or ethically work as 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 speech-language pathologist, meaning they are present at all times. You cannot work as an audiologist before earning a doctoral degree. It is only ethical to provide services when you are competent to do so.

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

We follow the university Grievance Policy: <https://registrar.byu.edu/catalog/2013-2014ucat/GeneralInfo/Records.php> (scroll down just a bit). Students may also contact the CAA, the accrediting affiliate of ASHA. The address of the CAA is: Council on Academic Accreditation, 2000 Research Boulevard #310, Rockville, Maryland 20850-32891, 1-800-498-2071.

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

(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 website. 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 sciences, biological sciences, behavioral sciences, and humanities. If you are not heading to grad school, invest in the BYU Placement Center, insist they treat you as a liberal arts major ("like communications or English nonteaching"), and let them help you find a pleasing career path.

Two related master's programs at BYU are worth investigating: the Master's in Public Administration (through the Marriott School of Management) and the TESOL program (Linguistics dept.).

A bachelor's degree in ComD might be a 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, 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 only have access to the letter if you're admitted to and attend that school).

- **How do I take the GRE?**

This exam is offered at the Thomas Prometric Testing Center; 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). BYU offers prep courses through Conferences and Workshops throughout the year; these courses cost \$515 (the last time we checked) but are highly spoken of by students who voluntarily took them.

### **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 310 and GPAs of 3.8 or higher for the last 60 semester hours. 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/graduate\\_admission\\_completion\\_profile.html](http://education.byu.edu/comd/graduate_admission_completion_profile.html)

### **Is it worth repeating a class 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. Note that the old grade stays on your transcript and will be calculated in your GPA.

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

There are many strong SLP programs across the country, enough that students above a 3.5 GPA for the last 60 hours or better can usually get in somewhere. Programs for the AuD 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?**

- There is no ComD minor.

- **Legal Issues**

- **Honor Code Standards**

- It is our expectation that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

- **Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment**

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor or contact the Equal Opportunity Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24 hours), [https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/default\\_reporter.asp](https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/default_reporter.asp), or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

- **Students with Disabilities**

- If you have a disability that may affect your performance in a course, you should get in touch with the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC) or at 801-422-2767. 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.

- **Appendix: ASHA Code of Ethics**

- <http://www.asha.org/Code-of-Ethics/>

**Application for Admission to the Communication Disorders (ComD) Major** [Submit this application to the ComD department secretary in 136 TLRB]

Name \_\_\_\_\_ BYU ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Grades and Semesters of Prerequisite Courses

(Note any repeats of prerequisite courses)  
Letter Grade

	Letter Grade Semester/Year			
Semester/Year				
ComD 133	_____	_____	_____	_____
Stat 121	_____	_____	_____	_____
PDBio 220	_____	_____	_____	_____

The application deadlines are January 1, May 1, or September 1 of each year. If you are taking the last of the prerequisite classes right before you turn in your application, note that fact on the form and the department will look up and enter the class grade when it is available. This allows you to turn in your application before leaving for a semester break even though semester grades are not yet available. Students will be notified of an admission decision in less than a week after the deadline.

I understand that the ComD department will access my academic record to confirm these classes and grades. If I am accepted into the ComD major, the department will officially change my major on the university records. Note that if you have too many credit hours to change majors, we won't be able to make the change.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date