

## **2021 BYU Communication Disorders (ComD) Undergraduate Handbook**

### **Overview**

This handbook tells you everything important about majoring in communication disorders at BYU. We hope we have provided clear and accurate answers to frequently asked questions. Please let us know if there are other things we should include or if something isn't clear or accurate.

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### **Getting into the Major**

#### **• What is the ComD major all about?**

Choosing to major in ComD means that you are genuinely interested in learning how to help people with hearing, speech, or language disorders and making a practical application of that knowledge to serve 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 in ComD aims to fully prepare you for graduate study, whether here at BYU or at another university. Our goal is to have you start your journey toward becoming an exemplary professional to whom we could refer our own parents or children rather than have you merely take courses, pass exams, and get grades. 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 capable as possible both in terms of academic knowledge and in attributes like compassion and diligence.

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

A bachelor's in ComD is a solid degree, emphasizing human communication and connections between the physical and biological sciences and the behavioral sciences. The degree gives you a good introductory foundation in the normal anatomy and processes of language, speech, and hearing, as well as 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, state licensure, and 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 bachelor's degree in ComD?**

You can't teach in 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 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. When you have completed all four prerequisite classes (ComD 133, Stat 121, and CELL 220, PHSCS 167), you may apply to the major by filling out an Application for Admission to the ComD Major form.

You will then submit the application form to the ComD Department office (136 TLRB). Your application will be reviewed at the next undergraduate admissions meeting. Admission will be based on the applicant's GPA in the three prerequisite classes, along with responses to essay prompts that allow the committee a better understanding of your potential to succeed in the major. If you are not admitted to the major, each of the four prerequisite classes may be repeated only once, and you may reapply. We advise a student who is turned down twice for admission to ComD to consider an alternate major.

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

One source is the ComD 133 course, "Introduction to Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology." 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, and so on.

### **Completing the Major**

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

- **Which classes must I take?**

All students must take the following classes before applying for the major: MATH 110, STAT 121, PHSCS 167, CELL 220 (preferred) or 210, and ComD 133. After admission to the major, students will take ComD 320, 330, 331, 332, 334, 350, 351, 420, 421, 430, 438, 442, 450, and either ASL 101 or another university-level foreign language class.

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

No. The sequence of classes is designed so that course content builds progressively over several semesters. Classes must be taken in the sequence specified below.

• **Course Sequence in the ComD Major**

Communication Disorders  
Undergraduate Course Sequence (rev. 6/1/21)

Area of Emphasis	Fall Start			
	Sem 1 - Fall	Sem 2 - Winter	Sem 3 - Fall	Sem 4 - Winter
 Language Core	332 Language Science	330 Language Development	350 Developmental Language Disorders	420 Neuro Foundations
 Speech Core	320 Speech Anatomy	331 Clinical Phonetics	351 Speech Sound Disorders	421 Speech Science
 Hearing Core	334 Hearing Science	438 Hearing Tests & Measures	442 Aural Rehabilitation	450 Professional Practices
 Capstone Courses			430 Medical Speech Pathology	

Area of Emphasis	Winter Start			
	Sem 1 - Winter	Sem 2 - Fall	Sem 3 - Winter	Sem 4 - Fall
 Language Core	332 Language Science	330 Language Development	350 Developmental Language Disorders	420 Neuro Foundations
 Speech Core	320 Speech Anatomy	331 Clinical Phonetics	351 Speech Sound Disorders	421 Speech Science
 Hearing Core	334 Hearing Science	438 Hearing Tests & Measures	442 Aural Rehabilitation	430 Medical Speech Pathology
 Capstone Courses				450 Professional Practices

Pre-LEP Admittance
ComD 133
Statistics 121
Phys 167
CELL 220 or 210

Pre or Post LEP admittance
ASL 101 or foreign lang
Math 110

• **I'm a transfer student—which classes should I take? Or: I want to complete my 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, 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 six semester hours of classes taught in the ComD Department can be substituted by transfer classes. To initiate this review, give the BYU faculty member who teaches the

class you want the transfer class substituted for sufficient information (catalog description, syllabus, and so on) that he or she can make a judgment and write a memo stating equivalence. Then give this memo to Dr. Tanner, who will write a memo to the Education Advisement Center that will be put in your file. When you have passed the class and have an official transcript noting this sent to BYU, notify the advisement center that you have passed this substitute class, and they will waive the BYU ComD class.

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

Each course (except 430) is offered in both fall and winter semesters. No ComD classes are available in spring or summer terms.

- **Beyond the ComD major classes, which classes should I take as an undergraduate toward meeting the 2020 ASHA standards?**

The ASHA standards implemented in 2020 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 (CELL 220 and STAT 121) help to meet this standard.

The implementation language about this standard says, “Acceptable courses in physical sciences should include physics or chemistry.” The Physics 167 class which is taken before applying to the major meets this requirement.

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 for a career that involves working with children, coursework in special education, reading / language arts, learning disabilities, and child development could be a good investment. For a career that focuses on working with adults, courses in neurology, gerontology or aging, and clinical psychology would be useful.

- **What does the Education Advisement Center do?**

The Education Advisement Center

- enters you into the computer system as an official pre-major or major,
- offers advisement on meeting general and religious education requirements,
- monitors your progress toward graduation,
- handles exceptions and academic / administrative problems (if any),
- maintains your permanent graduation file and approves your graduation,
- provides scholarship application information and forms

- **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, hearing, and their disorders; and sponsors a national convention (useful for papers presented and products displayed) and other workshops and information dissemination efforts. In speech-language pathology, persons who complete a master's degree (including specified coursework and clinical practice), complete 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). By paying membership dues, you can have online access to the ASHA journals, remain certified, vote for officers, and receive other benefits.

- **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 "nish-luh," it exists both at a national level and as a local chapter at BYU. Membership in the national NSSLHA (student fees are \$60) gives you online 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, and other benefits.

The local chapter of NSSLHA sponsors guest speakers, service projects, and social events. Membership in the local chapter costs about \$10 per year.

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

The state professional association 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.

- **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 consist of 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 will work with the SLP clinic director to complete the observation hours requirement before you can start seeing clients.

- **Who was Alonzo J. Morley?**

Alonzo J. Morley (1903–95) 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 there any financial aid available for 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 advisement office (350 MCKB).

## **Classes, Faculty, and Planning Ahead**

- **Help! I'm doing poorly in a class—what should I do?**

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

- a *The student is in the wrong field.* Success in any major is a combination of preexisting skills or abilities combined with work at 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 in foreign language learning, music, or 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, while others move toward child language, and others still 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 and be able to break each of these processes into components while 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 so you can advance your abilities.
- c *The student is distracted.* School has to be a high priority, especially in a climate as competitive as BYU. 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 that 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 practice self-discipline. You might visit the Counseling and Career Center in room 2500 of the WSC for help on study skills. Faculty know that some people are later-bloomers in terms of focus and self-discipline, and though professors base course grades on performance, complete turn-arounds are respected and can help to balance out earlier mediocre work when a student seeks recommendations for graduate school.

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

You can’t 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. You can’t 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 ComD Department?**

We follow the university's [Grievance Policy](#):

Students may contact the department chair and then the dean of the McKay School if they feel their problem has not been solved at the department level. They may also contact the CAA, the accrediting affiliate of ASHA. The address of the CAA is as follows: Council on Academic Accreditation, 2000 Research Boulevard #310, Rockville, MD 20850-32891. They can also be reached at (800) 498-2071.

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

Most faculty members keep regular office hours, and all faculty members can meet with students by appointment. Make an appointment or drop in during office hours to introduce yourself, ask questions, share comments about class, and so on.

- **Should I get involved in research? How do I do this?**

This depends on your interests and available time. If you get involved in faculty research and do well, it will broaden your experience in the field and allow you to make a contribution to the profession. It could potentially strengthen your application for graduate admission, at BYU or elsewhere, but this should not be your motive for engaging in research.

Read the faculty publications; faculty vitae and recent theses that can be found on the library's 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 funding.

## **Graduate School and After Graduation**

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

As mentioned before, a major in ComD is a solid liberal arts degree, emphasizing human communication and connections between the physical sciences, biological sciences, and behavioral sciences. If you are not heading to graduate school, go to BYU Career Services, ask to be treated as a liberal arts major (like communications or English nonteaching), and let them help you find a pleasing career path.

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 GRE or 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 and other science courses required for medical school.

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

Get excellent grades; do well on the GRE; be 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 whose classes you have done the best in. It doesn't matter if they can't remember your name and academic history offhand. Allow them two to three weeks of lead time and give them stamped, addressed envelopes along with the application forms. Most faculty prefer (and some require) a short résumé, containing grades in courses and favorable things they might mention. By waiving the "right of access," you give the recipient of your recommendation letter greater confidence in the letter's 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).

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

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 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. 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 available online [here](#).

- **What about SLP (speech-language pathologist) master's programs outside of BYU?**

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

There is no ComD minor.

### **Honor Code and Related Items**

- **Honor Code standards**

It is our expectation that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Call the Honor Code Office at (801) 422-2847 if you have questions about 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 (888) 238-1062 (24 hours), <https://titleix.byu.edu/>, 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.