

FALL 2023

GRADUATE HANDBOOK 2023



BYU McKay School
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

<https://education.byu.edu/comd/ms>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction.....	4
1.1	Mission and Aims of a BYU Education and the ComD graduate program.....	4
1.1.2	Mission of the University.....	5
1.1.3	Aims of a BYU Education	5
1.1.4	ComD Mission Statement.....	6
1.2	Overview of the ComD Graduate Program	6
2.0	Admissions.....	6
2.1	Application to the Master’s SLP Program	6
2.2	Admission Review Process	7
2.3	Admission with an Alternative Bachelor’s Degree	7
2.4	Initial Matriculation	7
3.0	Financing Your Education	8
3.1	Tuition	8
3.2	ComD Department Funding.....	8
3.2.1	Merit-Based Scholarships	8
3.2.2	Samuel and Barbara Fletcher Funds.....	8
3.2.3	Need-Based Grants.....	8
3.3	Additional Tuition Scholarship Resources	8
3.4	Conference and Travel Funding	9
3.5	Department Employment.....	9
4.0	Student Support Services, Advisement, and Student Representation	10
4.1	Counseling and Psychological Support	10
4.1.1	Commitment to Diversity	10
4.1.2	The Body Project.....	10
4.1.3	Suicide Prevention – QPR Training	10
4.2	The Office of Belonging	11
4.3	Preventing Sexual Harassment	11
4.4	Students with Disabilities	11

4.5	Multicultural Student Services.....	12
4.6	Women’s Services and Resources	12
4.7	Equitable Treatment Statement	12
4.8	Academic and Career Support Services	12
4.8.1	Research and Writing Center	12
4.8.2	BYU Tutoring.....	12
4.8.3	Career Services	12
5.0	Academic Coursework.....	13
5.1	Attendance Expectations.....	13
5.2	Course Registration	13
5.3	Graduate Class Schedule	14
5.3.1	Alternative Bachelor’s Degree.....	15
5.3.2	Plan of Study.....	15
5.3.3	Full-time Registration Requirements	15
5.3.4	Minimum registration.....	15
5.3.5	Maximum registration during Spring term.....	16
5.3.6	Evaluation of Student Progress	16
5.3.7	Making progress toward graduation	16
5.3.8	Course performance expectation.....	17
5.3.9	Remediation Policies	17
5.3.10	Graduate orientation meeting	17
6.0	Clinical Experience	17
6.1	BYU Speech and Language Clinic.....	17
6.2	BYU Externship Experiences	17
7.0	The ASHA NTE Praxis Exam in Speech-Language Pathology	18
8.0	Thesis	18
	Step 1: Identify a Thesis Topic and Select a Thesis Advisor	18
	Step 2: Finalize and Enter Your Thesis Advisory Committee Into the Graduate Progress System.....	19
	Step 3: Sign up for Thesis Credit	19

Step 4: Complete a Thesis Prospectus	19
Step 5: Conduct Thesis Study	20
Step 6: Write Thesis Report	20
Step 7: Submit your Draft for Review and Make Revisions	20
Step 8: Schedule and Hold Thesis Defense	21
Step 9: Submit your Thesis to the MSE and University	21
9.0 Graduation	22
9.1 Apply for Graduation.....	22
9.2 The Exit Interview	22
9.3 Graduation and Convocation Services.....	24
10.0 Other Useful Information	24
10.1 Current Ecclesiastical Endorsement	24
10.2 Faculty access and availability	24
10.3 Student mailboxes	24
10.4 Lab access and TLRB access	24
10.5 Student Organizations and Representation.....	25
10.6 Graduate Student Input.....	25
10.7 Grievances	25



Welcome to Brigham Young University and the Department of Communication Disorders

1.0 Introduction

The Graduate Handbook is a source of basic information to help the student understand and be guided through the graduate program for Communication Disorders (ComD). It is not intended to be all inclusive. Other information may be found on our [website](#), the BYU Graduate Studies [website](#), the David O. McKay School of Education [website](#), the University [website](#), the ComD Speech and Language [Clinic Handbook](#), the ComD [Externship Handbook](#), and the ComD Graduate Student [Info Hub on Learning Suite](#).

Our MS degree is a full-time on-campus program held during the Fall, Winter, and Spring over the course of (at least) two years. Students are required to be available Monday through Friday during each semester or

term as set forth by the university academic calendar at <https://academiccalendar.byu.edu/>.

It is the student's responsibility to be current in policies and procedures regarding their graduate program and progress throughout the program of study. It is also the student's responsibility to meet all current requirements at the time of graduation. If you should have questions, please contact the Graduate Coordinator regarding information in this handbook or for other information regarding our graduate program.



1.1 Mission and Aims of a BYU Education and the ComD graduate program

Understanding the mission and aims of a BYU education can assist you in finding belonging, success, and growth during your time as a graduate student within the ComD program.

1.1.2 Mission of the University

The [mission of Brigham Young University](#) — founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. That assistance should provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.

1.1.3 Aims of a BYU Education

BYU seeks to develop students of faith, intellect, and character who have the skills and the desire to continue learning and to serve others throughout their lives. These are the common aims of all education at BYU. Both those who teach in the classroom and those who direct activities outside the classroom are responsible for contributing to this complete educational vision. A BYU education should be:

- Spiritually Strengthening
- Intellectually Enlarging
- Character Building
- Leading to Lifelong Learning and Service

1.1.4 ComD Mission Statement

The [Communication Disorders department's mission statement](#) is to build belonging, achievement, and growth through Christlike service to:

- Empower lifelong learners
- Engage in impactful research
- Provide compassionate, evidence-based clinical care

And our Core Values are: Belonging, Becoming, Collaboration, Kindness

1.2 Overview of the ComD Graduate Program

The graduate program in ComD at BYU is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The program leads to the Master of Science (MS) degree and to the completion of all ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) requirements in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), pending the completion of a Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY). Upon completion of the program, you will be eligible to start your CFY and you will have met the requirements for a Utah Board of Education SLP license.

Students entering the program with all undergraduate prerequisite courses completed typically take four semesters and two terms to complete the program, with semesters being approximately 16 weeks and terms eight weeks in duration. All students complete required courses, clinical assignments, and a thesis. The program is divided into roughly three equal areas: academic coursework, clinical practicum, and the thesis. It is strongly recommended that a student not leave the geographical area or obtain full-time employment until all of the program requirements have been met.

2.0 Admissions

2.1 Application to the Master's SLP Program

The ComD department makes admission decisions once per year; the deadline for having all materials submitted to the [BYU Graduate Studies online application system](#) (SLATE) is January 15th each year. The application will involve submitting the following materials; more information on each requirement is available from the [BYU department website](#) or by accessing the associated link.

- [an application form and fee](#)
- transcripts from all colleges or universities attended
- three letters of recommendation
- a letter of intent
- [an ecclesiastical endorsement](#)

2.2 Admission Review Process

The admission process includes a review of the applicant's file, an in-person interview, and review of an applicant's written response to a general topic in the field of SLP. Applicant files will be reviewed and evaluated by a subcommittee of three academic and clinical faculty from the ComD department. From this review, a subset of applicants will be invited to participate in an in-person interview with a three-person panel composed of a member of the graduate faculty, clinical faculty, and a current graduate student matriculating in ComD. Applicants will be notified by email and through the BYU graduate studies website regarding their acceptance or denial into the program and will have until April 15th to accept the University's offer of admission. After April 15th, the offer may be withdrawn by the department.

2.3 Admission with an Alternative Bachelor's Degree

A bachelor's degree in the area of communicative sciences and disorders is recommended prior to beginning the master's degree program in SLP, but is not required to apply for admission. Admitted students who earned a bachelor's degree in an area other than communication sciences and disorders (e.g., psychology, linguistics, music) may not have acquired the foundation knowledge necessary to succeed in their graduate program and may be required to complete prerequisite courses prior to enrolling in many of the graduate courses or clinical experiences. The Graduate Coordinator in consultation with the department chair will evaluate whether completed courses satisfy the relevant ASHA and program

requirements. Following this evaluation students should meet with their advisor or the graduate coordinator to develop and submit to the department a written plan of study as described in section 2.3 below. It is important to understand that taking prerequisite courses could delay a student's enrollment in some academic and clinical courses, thereby prolonging their time to graduation.



2.4 Initial Matriculation

All accepted applicants enter the graduate program Fall semester. Since the course sequence is "fixed," we are unable to offer admissions beginning Winter semester, or Spring and Summer terms. In addition, courses are offered only once per academic year. If a student wishes to extend the duration of their program longer than 6 semesters/terms, they must meet with the graduate coordinator, clinical director, and their thesis advisor and develop a written plan of study to then place on file with the department.

3.0 Financing Your Education

3.1 Tuition

Tuition and general fees for all academic programs are established annually by Brigham Young University. Current information regarding tuition amounts, fees, and applicable due dates and can be found on the [BYU Financial Services website](#). Questions regarding tuition and fees can be directed to [BYU Enrollment Services](#).

3.2 ComD Department Funding

3.2.1 Merit-Based Scholarships

Each calendar year the department receives money from the McKay School of Education (MSE) and the university to assist students with tuition costs. Historically, these tuition scholarships have been awarded twice each year (Fall and Winter semesters) for two years. Thus, a student might expect four disbursements over the course of their graduate program. Because funding fluctuates each year, the amount of these scholarships will vary. Each student enrolled in the program will be automatically considered for these scholarships, with no application being necessary. To be eligible for these awards students must have satisfactory program status and be in good standing with the university.

3.2.2 Samuel and Barbara Fletcher Funds

Samuel and Barbara Fletcher graciously gifted funding to BYU to assist students in the Communication Sciences and Disorders, especially to benefit underserved communities or students from underserved communities. The application process to this fund is being developed. You can reach out to the Belonging and Equity Committee within the ComD department with questions.

3.2.3 Need-Based Grants

Need-based grants may be available for students experiencing particular financial hardship. If you find yourself unable to pursue your studies within the program due to financial difficulties, please consult with the graduate coordinator or the department chair. There are often additional sources of assistance that can be sought when the need is great.

3.3 Additional Tuition Scholarship Resources

[BYU Scholarship Resources](#)

A list of scholarships available across campus. Not all scholarships listed are available to graduate students so pay attention to requirements before applying.

[FastWEB](#)

FastWEB is a tailored scholarship search of over 180,000 scholarships, fellowships, loans, and grants. This resource is available to students to search for free.

[FinAid Guide to Financial Aid](#)

FinAid is an annotated collection of information about student financial aid with searchable databases.

[ASHA Foundation](#)

The ASHA foundation provides grant funds to students (who are undergraduate seniors accepted to a master's program or students currently pursuing master's or doctoral (research or clinical) degrees)

3.4 Conference and Travel Funding

Occasionally funds are available for students to receive financial assistance toward expenses for presenting at a professional conference, like the conference fee, travel, lodging, etc. If you want to pursue this type of funding, please consult with your thesis advisor or the graduate coordinator. You will need to provide evidence of an accepted proposal to receive funding if available.

3.5 Department Employment

Every semester there are opportunities to work in the department as a research or teaching assistant. These opportunities aren't formally posted – such opportunities are discovered by consulting with individual department faculty.

If you have the approval from a faculty member to work as a research or teaching assistant you will then need to attend to the following:

- [Make sure you understand the requirements for working on campus.](#)
- Meet with/email the ComD department office manager to facilitate your hiring paperwork
- Visit the Student Employment Office in the Wilkinson Center and fill out an I-9
- After submitting your I-9, official hiring can take a few days
- Do not begin working until you have received an “authorization to work” email

Hourly Employees:

- Clock in and out using the BYU Y-time app
- Be fastidious about clocking in and out
- It is not recommended that graduate students work more than 20 hours/week
- As a student employee, **you cannot work more than 20 hours/week** during term time unless directly authorized in writing by your supervisor, even if your ACA average is below the maximum
- Your paycheck will be deposited directly into your student account every two weeks
- Any issues or questions about the status of your hire or mistakes on your timecard should be directed to the department office manager.



4.0 Student Support Services, Advisement, and Student Representation

4.1 Counseling and Psychological Support

The [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) professionals (CAPS) at BYU provide a place of refuge on campus for any who are experiencing distress. This office has walk-in hours from 8am to 4pm, Monday through Friday, for any students who would benefit from a safe and confidential space to share their feelings (1500 WSC). Those who need help after 4pm can call CAPS at 801.422.3035 and speak with a crisis specialist. A brief description and the associated links for a number of additional outreach services are listed below:



4.1.1 Commitment to Diversity

The Counseling and Psychological Services has described their [commitment to diversity](#) in the following statement: “We aspire to maintain a culture of inclusion. We provide counseling services that are confidential and strive to create a safe environment for students of diverse age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, relationship status, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, body type, and mental and physical ability. We respect and seek to understand the unique intersection of identities that individuals bring to our center, and believe that commitment to diversity directly contributes to the Aims of a BYU Education.”

4.1.2 The Body Project

A group of students working together to decrease adherence to the appearance ideal and increase body acceptance! [THE BODY PROJECT](#) is a fun and interactive program designed to empower women to challenge unrealistic cultural messages about the appearance ideal and develop healthy body acceptance.

4.1.3 Suicide Prevention – QPR Training

QPR is a nationally recognized [suicide prevention program](#) aimed at helping you know what to do and say when someone close to you is considering suicide. We’ll teach you what signs to look for, how to approach someone who’s struggling, and where to go for help.

4.2 The Office of Belonging

Information and events regarding efforts to create a greater community of equity and belonging can be found on the website created by The Office of Belonging, describing their mission with the following statement:

We are united by our common primary identity as children of God (Acts 17:29; Psalm 82:6) and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (BYU Mission Statement). We strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love (Mosiah 18:21) where:

- All relationships reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor (BYU Mission Statement);
- We value and embrace the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community (1 Corinthians 12:12–27);
- Our interactions create and support an environment of belonging (Ephesians 2:19); and
- The full realization of each student's divine potential is our central focus (BYU Mission Statement).

4.3 Preventing Sexual 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 sexual 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 contact the department chair or contact the [Title IX office](#) which was created to provide assistance to those encountering instances of sexual harassment. Contact can be made through the [Title IX website](#), by calling their office at 801-422-8692, or at titleix@byu.edu. Students may also contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office directly at 801-422-2847.

4.4 Students with Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which extends civil rights to people with disabilities and provides for reasonable accommodations. The university makes every effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities within the scope of existing laws, and this is a shared responsibility. The [University Accessibility Center](#) (UAC) provides academic accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services to students with disabilities and consults with the university community regarding disability access issues. The UAC reviews accommodation requests from students with disabilities on a case-by-case basis to determine if the requests are reasonable and engages in an interactive dialogue with each student to ensure that proper accessibility considerations are made. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete a course successfully, please contact the UAC through their [website](#), by calling 801-422-2767, or by email at uacfrontdesk@byu.edu.

4.5 Multicultural Student Services

[Multicultural Student Services](#) is a unique team of multicultural specialists who value the total development of the multicultural student within the Aims of a BYU education. This office seeks to develop a BYU environment of "fellow citizenry" where multiculturalism can flourish.

4.6 Women's Services and Resources

The mission of the office of [Women's Services and Resources](#) is to "Facilitate the personal, academic, and spiritual success of women at BYU by empowering them through education and connecting them with resources to help them excel as individuals, build thriving families, and strengthen their communities."

4.7 Equitable Treatment Statement

Our department and clinic, services are provided on equitable basis without regard to gender, sexual orientation, age, race, creed, national origin, or disability. **ASHA Code of Ethics** may be viewed at the following URL: <http://www.asha.org/Code-of-Ethics/>

4.8 Academic and Career Support Services



4.8.1 Research and Writing Center

The [BYU Research & Writing Center](#) provides a supportive and resource-rich environment where trained consultants collaborate with students to increase awareness, abilities, and confidence in any part of the research and writing process.

4.8.2 BYU Tutoring

[BYU Tutoring](#) Services offers free volunteer peer-to-peer tutoring for classes taught at BYU. Tutors help reinforce concepts covered in class and assist students in developing essential learning skills. All tutors have achieved a B grade or higher in classes they tutor and have been oriented on essential tutoring skills.

4.8.3 Career Services

[BYU Career Services](#) assists students with job seeking skills, resume reviews, mock interviews, and many other services that help students network with the professional community and launch their career.

5.0 Academic Coursework

5.1 Attendance Expectations

Our MS degree is a full-time on-campus program held during the Fall, Winter, and Spring over the course of two years. Students are required to be available Monday through Friday during each semester or term (spring) as set forth by the university academic calendar at <https://academiccalendar.byu.edu/>. Although academic classes are often not held on Fridays, this day is intended to be used for department seminars and orientation meetings, thesis meetings and work, clinical diagnostic cases, or other educational opportunities.

Although it is understood that students may occasionally miss class or clinic due to medical appointments, family emergencies, or other university excused reasons, it is expected that students will attend all class, clinic, externship, and other department meetings. University excused absences do not include vacations, family gatherings, or outside work responsibilities. The department recognizes the value of these events in a student's life; however, they need to be planned for the weekends, during semester/term breaks, or during the summer term. A student's lack of attendance during classes, clinic, or other department meetings may result in an "unsatisfactory" evaluation for a given term or semester.

Instructors and clinical educators may occasionally use online or video conferencing (e.g., Zoom) elements as part of their instruction; however, the majority of your educational experiences within our program will be in-person. Although a student may be given permission by an instructor to attend a class or meeting via video conferencing in extenuating circumstances, **this mode of instruction is the exception and not an expectation.**

If you are encountering difficulty attending class or clinic due to transportation, medical, financial, or other challenges, please communicate with your advisor, the graduate coordinator, the clinic director, or department chair as soon as possible, so we can help facilitate a positive solution. Likewise, please always know that the office of Counseling and Psychological Services is available to help students overcome challenging circumstances <https://caps.byu.edu/>

5.2 Course Registration

Students can register for courses on the BYU course registration website. When accessing the registration website students will need to select the intended semester and year to view the available courses. If you are registering in the appropriate course and semester, space in a graduate course will always be available. If you are waitlisted for a course or unable to register, please contact the department manager, graduate coordinator, or the individual instructor for an Add Code. Failure to pay tuition or fees by the required due dates, or the lack of a current ecclesiastic endorsement may also prevent a student from registering for courses.

5.3 Graduate Class Schedule

The required courses for the MS degree are listed below by the semester offered and the number of credits. Note that six hours of thesis credit (699R) is required, which can be taken throughout your program. A detailed description of each course and the associated learning objects can be found on the [graduate studies website](#).

Graduate Course Sequencing (rev. 06/01/23)	
Fall – Year 1	Fall – Year 2
610 Assessment & Diagnosis (3 Credit Hours)	688R Practicum in SLP (1-2) – section 3
657 Voice & Resonance Disorders (3)	699R Master's Thesis (variable) *
676 Aphasia (3)	
690 Speech Sound Disorders (3)	
688R Practicum in SLP (1) – section 1	
699R Master's Thesis (variable) *	
Winter – Year 1	Winter – Year 2
600 Research Methods (2)	688R Practicum in SLP (1-2)- section 3
634 Cognitive Communication (3)	699R Master's Thesis (variable) *
675 Motor Speech Disorders (3)	
679 School-Age Language Disorders (3)	
688R Practicum in SLP (1) – section 1	
699R Master's Thesis (variable) *	
Spring – Year 1	Spring – Year 2
630 Early Childhood Intervention (3)	636 Multicultural Issues in SLP (3)
633 Dysphagia Management (3)	658 Fluency Disorders (2)
674 Autism & Severe Disabilities (3)	688R Practicum in SLP (1) - optional
688R Practicum in SLP (1) – section 1	699R Master's Thesis (variable) *
699R Master's Thesis (variable) *	
<p>* All students are required to enroll and pass 6 thesis credits (ComD 699R) during their program of study. Students must be enrolled in 2 credit hours, at least 1 credit being 699R, the semester in which they defend their thesis (please refer to section 8.0 – step 3 of this handbook for more detail).</p>	
<p>Students must have a foundational knowledge in statistics, physical science, math, biology, and social/behavioral science. Please contact the graduate coordinator to evaluate previous coursework in these areas.</p>	

5.3.1 Alternative Bachelor's Degree

As discussed in section 2.3 above, if a student was admitted to the program without first earning a bachelor's degree directly related to communication sciences and disorders, they may be required to obtain the foundation knowledge necessary to succeed in their graduate program by completing prerequisite courses prior to enrolling in graduate courses or clinical experiences. BYU's graduate program must certify to ASHA that the requirements for clinical certification have been met. The ASHA standards specify that "...the applicant must have demonstrated knowledge of the biological sciences, physical sciences, statistics, and the social/behavioral sciences."

If your bachelor's degree was from an institution offering a CAA-accredited graduate program, the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department chair, will evaluate whether completed courses satisfy the relevant ASHA and program requirements. If your degree was not from an institution offering a CAA-accredited graduate program, a more detailed evaluation of each class will be necessary. You will need to meet with the Graduate Coordinator, prepared with documentation such as texts, syllabus, exams, and notes to allow them to determine course equivalence. With the advisement of the graduate coordinator, each student will develop and submit a Plan of Study to the department. It is important to understand that taking prerequisite courses could delay a student's enrollment in some graduate academic and clinical courses, thereby prolonging their time to graduation.

5.3.2 Plan of Study

All graduate students must have a Plan of Study approved and on file in the online [Graduate Progress system](#) (GradProg) by the third week of the second semester (i.e., Winter semester) of matriculation in the program. Students must have the Plan of Study filed by Friday of the third week in January. This will be approved by the graduate program managers (the graduate coordinator and department office manager).

5.3.3 Full-time Registration Requirements

Full time student status may influence students' eligibility of scholarships, loan status, cost of tuition, and standing with the University. The requirements for full time student status can also be affected by their citizenship and residency status. A detailed explanation of what constitutes full time graduate student status and the associated petition processes are described on the [graduate studies website](#).

5.3.4 Minimum registration

Graduate students must maintain a minimum registration level of 6 credit hours per academic year and complete at least 2 credit hours EVERY semester or term of graduate study in which a student is accessing university faculty or facilities. For registration purposes, Spring and Summer terms are considered two blocks of a single semester. As detailed on the [graduate studies registration website](#), minimum registration levels are also required when a student defends their thesis and graduates. It is important to note that registration requirements may differ for international students.

5.3.5 Maximum registration during Spring term

[University registration policy](#) also specifies a maximum number of credits that a graduate student can enroll during a semester or term. To take more than the maximum, students can submit a petition to the Graduate Studies Office (105 FPH, 801-422-4091). It is recommended that students consult with the graduate coordinator and the department manager prior to submitting a petition to exceed the maximum registration policy.

5.3.6 Evaluation of Student Progress

Each student will be evaluated by the department faculty after each semester, with spring and summer terms considered together as one term, to determine if they are making progress toward their degree. Progress will be rated as *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory* based on the following criteria:

- Academic Coursework (maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0 and a minimum of a B- in each course in the program)
- Clinical Learning (satisfactory performance in both BYU clinical experiences and externship placements)
- Adherence to the BYU Honor Code and the ASHA Code of Ethics

If a student receives an unsatisfactory evaluation and corrective action is needed, the student will be contacted by secure electronic messaging. Students are encouraged to promptly address with the department any unsatisfactory areas and initiate a remediation plan of study with the appropriate faculty.

Two consecutive or three total unsatisfactory evaluations will result in a student being disenrolled from the graduate program by the office of Graduate Studies.



5.3.7 Making progress toward graduation

The graduate program is designed to be completed in 2 years (4 semesters and 2 terms) by students who had a ComD undergraduate major. Students coming from a different undergraduate major usually take 3 years (6 semesters and 3 terms). Our department evaluates your progress after each term, so that any concerns can be handled quickly. Progress is defined as acceptably passing all required courses (with a grade of B- or better), progressing toward the successful completion of the thesis, clinic requirement completion, and passing the national Praxis exam in Speech-Language Pathology.

5.3.8 Course performance expectation

You must earn a grade of B- or better in any class for the class to count toward degree requirements. Courses with grades lower than B- will require remediation, and your progress for that term will be rated as *unsatisfactory*. In addition, it may be necessary to work with the instructor to assure competence in the deficient areas. Please discuss any concerns with your professors early to try to avoid getting this as a final stage. As faculty within the Communication Disorder department, we want to work with you to ensure your best success in every class and that you are learning the information and skills being taught.

5.3.9 Remediation Policies

One of our goals as a preparation program for SLP clinicians is to ensure that each student is competent in all of the important knowledge and skill areas covered in each course. Sometimes concern may arise that a student isn't mastering the skills or foundational knowledge covered in a course, and so a procedure known as remediation is undertaken. This remediation typically consists of extra study and/or demonstration tasks that indicate that the necessary knowledge or skills have now been acquired. These tasks may include such activities as retaking a test, taking an alternate form of a test, redoing a project or oral report, writing a paper, rewriting a paper, or retaking the class; however, the particular procedures and tasks differ for each course and are specified in the course syllabus. The student, faculty and department chair will meet together, using the Student Review Plan sheet, to discuss and agree on specific actions to remediate these concerns and demonstrate mastering of that skill/knowledge.

5.3.10 Graduate orientation meeting

A graduate orientation meeting will be held during the first two weeks of Fall semester for both new and continuing graduate students. This is a required meeting to attend, as introductions are made and revised handbooks, forms, and other information are presented to students.

6.0 Clinical Experience

6.1 BYU Speech and Language Clinic

During their program each student will have the opportunity to engage in clinical and experiential learning in the BYU Speech and Language Clinic. It is essential that you gain an understanding regarding the clinic's policies and procedures located in the Speech and Language [Clinic Handbook](#).

6.2 BYU Externship Experiences

A significant portion of the graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology is the clinical practicum experience. Following a successful experience in the BYU Speech and Language Clinic, each student will

continue their clinical training through off campus externship placements. The [Externship Handbook](#) serves as a resource of information as you prepare for and complete your off-campus clinical externship experiences.

7.0 The ASHA NTE Praxis Exam in Speech-Language Pathology

The [ASHA NTE Praxis Exam](#) in Speech-Language Pathology is a requirement for graduation and is administered by Educational Testing Services (ETS). Students should take the exam early enough that they can send the PDF of their passing score to the ComD department secretary prior to the university deadline for graduation. Passing scores on the test are set by ETS in consultation with ASHA. Please also request to share the results with BYU when registering for the exam. The code to share with BYU-ComD is R0307.

There are two study manuals available to borrow from the department office manager. They can be kept for two weeks – one at a time. Please try to time this sensibly as they are shared among all of the graduate students.

8.0 Thesis

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.

Step 1: Identify a Thesis Topic and Select a Thesis Advisor

Identifying your thesis topic requires introspective thought and study, based on your interests and career goals. Likewise, selecting a thesis advisor should be based on the individual that will best assist you in pursuing your research topic and fit your plan of study timeline.

Process for selecting a thesis advisor

- Review the information regarding each faculty member's research interests and current projects described in the [Faculty Directory](#) and on the [graduate student information portal](#).
- Attend the orientation meeting held the first week of Fall semester where graduate faculty will take 5 minutes to introduce their research and upcoming projects.
- Schedule a brief interview with up to 3 graduate faculty that seem to be the best fit in terms of your research interests and plan of study. These interviews may be individual or as a small group of students, depending on individual faculty preference. If you are having difficulty selecting a topic/advisor after 3 interviews, consult with the graduate coordinator.
- During the fourth week of Fall semester a confidential poll will be sent to students asking them to select in rank order three faculty they would like to have as a thesis advisor. Faculty will also be consulted to facilitate a successful student-advisor match.
- Each student's recommended thesis advisor will be sent to them individually through email.

- If a student has previously worked in a faculty member's research lab, they may request to continue to work with this individual as their thesis advisor. Approval must be obtained by the faculty advisor and graduate coordinator.
- It is not always possible to match a student with their first choice of advisor – but please know that as a department we are confident that each student will receive excellent advisement regarding their thesis.

Step 2: Finalize and Enter Your Thesis Advisory Committee Into the Graduate Progress System

One graduate faculty member will be your advisor and thesis committee chair. You will also need to select two other graduate faculty members to complete your thesis committee (at least one of whom is from the ComD department). Consult with your chair on who would be appropriate to serve on your thesis committee.

After these faculty have agreed to be on your committee, submit your Committee Members and Program of Study on the [Graduate Progress website](#). An email will subsequently be sent by graduate studies to your advisor, committee members, and the graduate coordinator requesting their approval of your Program of Study. The Program of Study must be completed by the end of your second semester or term. With advisory committee consent, changes in this program of study can be made, including changes in advisory committee membership.

Step 3: Sign up for Thesis Credit

If a student is consulting with their advisor or utilizing university resources to complete their thesis, they must be enrolled in thesis credit (ComD 699R) directed by a specific faculty member. The number of thesis credits available is variable and should be selected based on the degree of thesis involvement during the semester or term (e.g., minimal = 1 credit, moderate = 2 credits, heavy = 3 credits). A student must be enrolled in 2 university credits at the time of their thesis defense and have enrolled in a total of 6 thesis credits to qualify for graduation from the program.

Step 4: Complete a Thesis Prospectus

A **prospectus** is a formalized plan for carrying out a student's thesis research and must be approved by the third week of Winter semester of the first year in the program. It describes the topic to be studied, justifies the study of a topic considering 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 your thinking about the proposed research. The prospectus serves as a contract between a student and the advisory committee, in that if the student carries out the study as described and approved, the advisory committee will not require "major" additions or changes to the described study. The prospectus is also a description of the study to those who review it for human subject guideline compliance (the Institutional Review Board) or grant access to human subjects.

At least one meeting of the advisory committee is designated as the **prospectus defense**. In this meeting, you present your prospectus and answer any questions about the study, or the document as prepared to date. A prospectus defense may be held as soon as the advisory committee agrees to hold one. You should email your prospectus to each committee member in advance of the prospectus defense, giving them adequate time to review your work. You must also upload your prospectus document to the graduate progress webpage - [GradProg](#). After the prospectus defense, you make any necessary changes to the prospectus and request the approval of committee members online.

Step 5: Conduct Thesis Study

A student will conduct their thesis study as outlined in their approved prospectus. Make sure you frequently and regularly check in with your chair and advisory committee during this stage. Each student will have a different trajectory for their thesis, focusing on their individual plan of study and not concerned with other students' progress. Your advisor will help guide and support you in this process. Your success is dependent upon continual progress, which is the responsibility of each individual student. Students should discuss any concerns regarding the progress or timing of their study with your thesis advisor as soon as possible.

Step 6: Write Thesis Report



Theses completed in the ComD department need to adhere to the format required by the University and MSE. University formatting guidelines and templates are available at the [graduate studies academic portal](#). In general, a student's thesis will follow a [Journal Ready](#) or a [Traditional Thesis](#) format. Students should consult with their advisor and refer to the preceding linked templates provided by the MSE. These resources and templates are very helpful in the development of a thesis report. The majority of the formatting guidelines follow the most current version of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Step 7: Submit your Draft for Review and Make Revisions

Students submit a complete draft of their thesis to their advisory committee after having worked with their advisor to develop a polished draft with all sections of the document in complete form. Committee members typically need **at least one week** to read and provide suggestions for improvement.

After making the recommended improvements, request permission from your advisor and committee members to schedule a thesis defense on a specific day, time, and location, which is confirmed by the advisor and committee through the grad progress website. The date for the defense must be a time when the university is in session (i.e., during class or final exam days). Students then upload their final pre-

defense thesis draft to the grad progress website. In addition, students must send their final pre-defense thesis draft to the department office manager and graduate coordinator for a formatting review. This draft must be received by the due date indicated by the department (refer to the Thesis and Graduation Due Dates document posted within the TLRB and distributed electronically by the department office manager).

Step 8: Schedule and Hold Thesis Defense

Your thesis defense is an official university meeting which any member of the University or community may attend and observe the defense of the thesis. Only a student's advisor and/or committee members may participate in the meeting discussions. Although the format may vary, generally students will be asked to make a short presentation of their study and findings, with questions from the committee members during or immediately following the student's presentation. The format of the defense meeting is directed by a student's advisory chair. It is a university policy that a student and committee members hold the thesis defense meeting in person. In cases where a committee member does not reside locally, a petition for an exception to this policy may be filed with Graduate Studies, through the department office manager.

Results of Defense

Upon a successful defense of the thesis, the advisor and committee members will record the result of the thesis defense in the Graduate Program System.

- **Pass:** no changes are necessary; the thesis is accepted, approval is entered online at the graduate progress website, and the thesis is sent to the graduate coordinator, department secretary, and the MSE for review.
- **Pass with qualifications:** The thesis needs minor changes. The committee chair does not approve the thesis defense until the changes have been satisfactorily completed. Then you "pass." This is the typical outcome. Often the committee indicates their approval of the thesis defense online immediately after the defense, yet the thesis chair does not do so until all mutually agreed upon changes to the thesis have been made.
- **Recess:** The thesis requires major revisions, editing, or a lengthy reanalysis of presented data, which require another defense meeting. This subsequent defense meeting must be held within one month of the initial defense meeting.
- **Fail:** The student's degree program is terminated immediately. Your thesis chair and committee should not let you schedule a defense if they think that outcome 3 or 4 might occur.

Step 9: Submit your Thesis to the MSE and University

If the result of a student's thesis defense is "pass" or "pass with qualifications", they need to submit a digital copy (typically in MS Word via email) of their thesis, with the associated MSE checklist completed, to the ComD office manager after completing any required changes to the document. The office manager reviews the thesis to provide any additional formatting and editing suggestions. Following this review, the document is then digitally forwarded to the graduate coordinator for approval. If a student's draft has numerous errors (greater than 7) in APA/university formatting or English usage, the department will stop

reviewing the document and request that the student and their advisor work to revise their thesis draft to meet the applicable formatting guidelines. This may delay the review of a student's thesis draft, possibly resulting in the student not meeting desired graduation deadlines.

After receiving departmental approval from the graduate coordinator through the grad progress website, the student sends a MS Word version of the thesis to the Dean's office for their review and approval at **msegradsec@byu.edu**. The Dean's Office generally requires up to 10 working days for their 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, a PDF of the thesis is submitted as an electronic thesis (ETD) through the Graduate Progress website. The final ETD is reviewed at the department and college level before being approved and sent to the library. No changes can be made to the thesis after it is sent to the library repository. A flow chart of the MSE thesis approval process is displayed below.

9.0 Graduation

9.1 Apply for Graduation

During the first month of the semester in which a student plans to graduate, they will need to apply for graduation online in the [Graduate Progress System](#) no later than the deadlines listed on the current [Graduation Dates and Deadlines](#).

The instructions can be found here: <https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/graduation>.

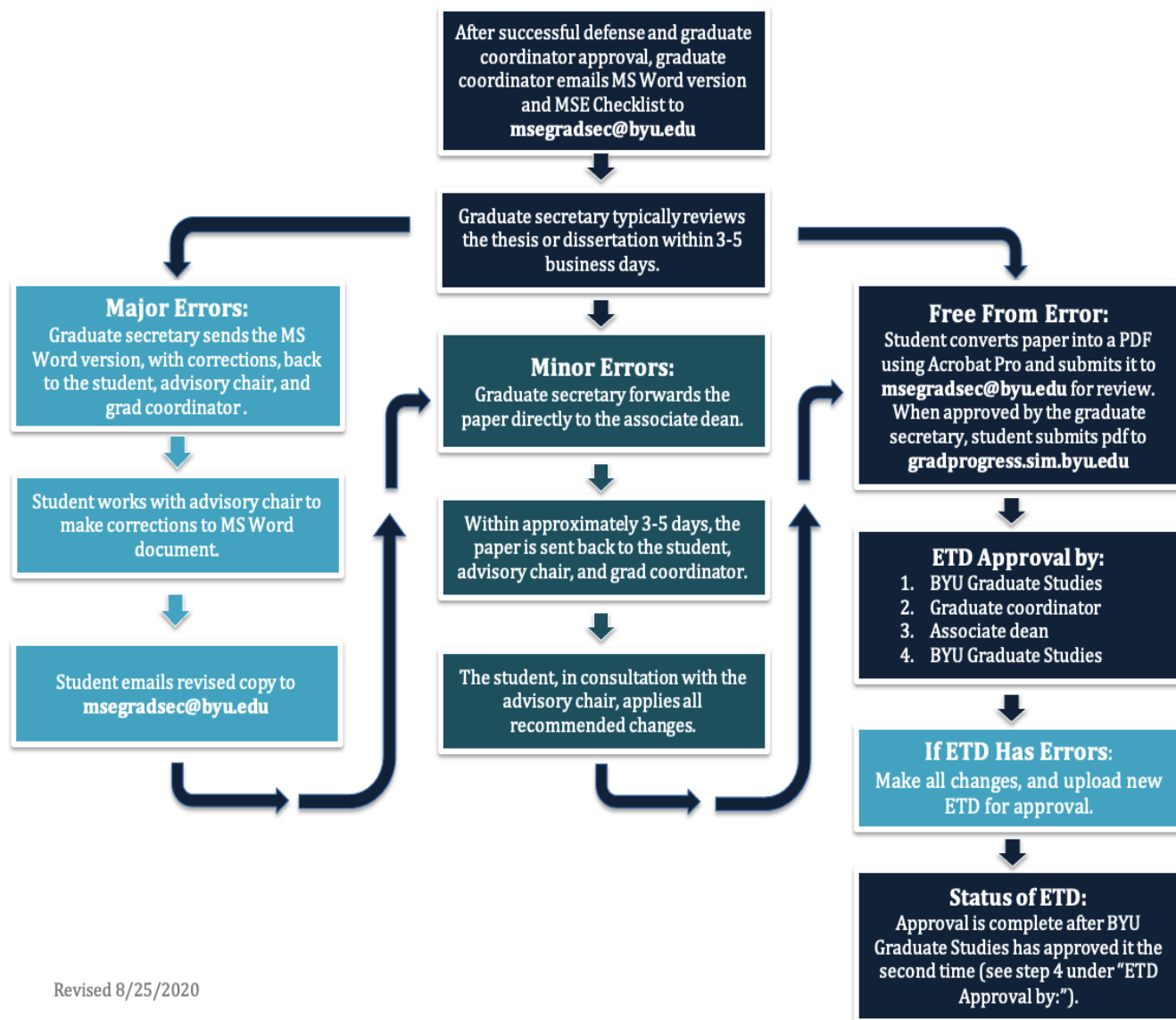
9.2 The Exit Interview

Each student must have an exit interview with the department chair prior to your graduation. This interview is scheduled in advance of the graduation deadline (but after completion of your thesis defense) to allow a review of your file, including the checking of clinical requirement completion. The department chair interviews you about the quality and content of your graduate experience and collects any suggestions you wish to offer.



Figure 1 – Thesis approval process

McKay School of Education Thesis & Dissertation Approval Process



Revised 8/25/2020

9.3 Graduation and Convocation Services

Students who are on track to graduate during the academic year may attend the University graduation ceremonies and walk in the MSE Convocation normally held in April, even if the student has yet to complete Spring term courses, finish the thesis, or finish their clinical hours. A student's diploma will be dated according to when they complete all requirements for their degree. Please attend to the applicable due dates and consult with your advisor to avoid paying additional tuition charges in a subsequent semester or term.

10.0 Other Useful Information

10.1 Current Ecclesiastical Endorsement

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

10.2 Faculty access and availability

Faculty are typically under contract for Fall and Winter Semesters and for Spring or Summer term. Faculty should advise their thesis students of longer (one week or more) planned absences. Students should consider faculty availability when developing their plan of study. Generally, the faculty are not readily available during Summer term.

10.3 Student mailboxes

Mailboxes are provided in room 150 TLRB. Do not leave valuables or any confidential material in these mailboxes, as the hall is open to the public. Please do not leave any documents, assessments or paperwork with your clients' names or private details in this room.

10.4 Lab access and TLRB access

If you are involved with faculty research or as a teaching assistant, and need access to that faculty member's lab space, the office manager (or the student secretaries in room 140) can submit your ID number to the University to let you use your Student ID card to open the outside entry clinic and lab doors. For access to the Taylor building outside of normal working hours, the secretary will send a request to the Comprehensive Clinic secretaries, so you can have access when the building is locked.

10.5 Student Organizations and Representation

NSSLHA, the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, is the student branch of ASHA. BYU has a local NSSLHA chapter. Membership typically includes on-line access to all ASHA journals as well as a discount on the cost of joining ASHA after graduation. NSSLHA membership also allows a reduced price on registration for the annual ASHA national convention, access to a job placement service, etc.

You may also 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. If there is interest, a student can be elected as the ComD representative to the GSS.

10.6 Graduate Student Input

The ComD department actively solicits graduate student input; such input is the primary function of the graduate student representative, who is elected by their peers during the Fall semester of the first year. 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.

10.7 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 can be voiced to the graduate student representative (or the NSSLHA president), who may present the issue in ComD faculty meeting. Concerns can also be expressed to the clinic director, graduate coordinator, or the department chair.

For specific concerns, students are directed to follow the university [Grievance Policy](#). If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please contact the department chair or contact the [Title IX office](#) which was created to provide assistance to those encountering instances of sexual harassment. Contact can be made through the [Title IX website](#), by calling their office at 801-422-8692, or at titleix@byu.edu. Students may also contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office directly at 801-422-2847.

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 20850-3289, 1-800-498-2071.