

# Information for Iowa State University Students Seeking Speech Language Pathology Graduate Programs

## *Overview*

Each speech language pathology (SLP) graduate program has different admission requirements. Some programs only accept students with an undergraduate degree in SLP. Some programs require specific undergraduate courses as prerequisites (see below), and some programs admit students from a wide variety of disciplines such as Linguistics, Psychology, English, and others. You can see the admission requirements for various graduate programs on the ASHA EdFind database at <https://find.asha.org/ed/#sort=relevancy>. Based upon the current information in the ASHA EdFind database, approximately 80 programs offer prerequisite courses online and 50 programs do not require prerequisites for admission into the program.

*IMPORTANT TIP:* Throughout your undergraduate education, keep all syllabi and course materials (notes, assignments, essays, etc.). These may be required for certification by your future graduate program.

## *Majors*

There are several different majors at Iowa State University that could lead to acceptance into a SLP graduate program. These include:

- Linguistics
- Psychology
- Communication Studies
- English

If you are unsure what may be the best option for you, consider meeting with the Linguistics advisor Isabella Perksen ([iperksen@iastate.edu](mailto:iperksen@iastate.edu)) or an academic advisor in Psychology ([psychadv@iastate.edu](mailto:psychadv@iastate.edu)) to explore which options may be best for you.

## *Content Area Courses*

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) states that to earn the Certificate of Clinical Competence to practice as an SLP (CCC-SLP), students must take courses in several "Content areas" (<https://www.asha.org/certification/course-content-areas-for-slp-standards/>). Unlike graduate programs prerequisites, these classes are required for ALL SLPs. Content area courses are much easier to take as an undergraduate at ISU than as a graduate student in SLP. The content areas include:

- Biological Sciences
- Physical Sciences (Physics or Chemistry)
- Statistics
- Social Sciences and Behavioral Sciences (e.g., Psychology)

Iowa State University offers courses in all of these areas, and these classes can both assist you in your journey to becoming a SLP and satisfy undergraduate degree requirements. Talk with your academic advisor to see how classes in this content area can fit into your degree plan. Here are a few classes offered at ISU that fulfill the content areas:

- Biological Sciences
  - Biol 255: Fundamentals of Human Anatomy
  - Biol 256: Fundamentals of Human Physiology
- Physics/Chemistry
  - PHYS 101: Physics for the Nonscientist
  - PHYS 198: Physics of Music
  - CHEM 160: Chemistry in Modern Society
- Statistics
  - STAT 101: Principles of Statistics
  - STAT 104: Introduction to Statistics
- Psychology
  - PSYCH 230: Developmental Psychology
  - PSYCH 310: Brain and Behavior
  - PSYCH 312: Sensation and Perception
  - PSYCH 313: Learning and Memory
  - PSYCH 316: Cognitive Psychology
  - PSYCH 413: Psychology of Language

## ***Commonly Required Prerequisite Courses***

Though there are no 'universal' admission requirements, there are some courses that are commonly required prerequisites and can help strengthen your applications. These include:

- Phonetics
  - Offered at ISU as LING 371 Phonetics and Phonology
- Language Development
  - Offered at ISU as LING 471 Language and Reading Development in Children
- Anatomy and Physiology for Speech and Hearing
- Speech / Hearing Science
- Speech / Language Disorders
- Introduction to Audiology / Aural Rehabilitation

Several of these courses are not offered at Iowa State, but there are options to take these classes elsewhere while you are a student at ISU. You can take some of these classes through the National Student Exchange program, consider possible study abroad options, or look to take courses online through other universities. The best time to consider a semester of NSE or study abroad is likely during your junior year. We recommend you discuss with your advisor about NSE or study abroad interest as early as possible.

### **National Student Exchange Options**

The National Student Exchange Program at ISU allows for intercollegiate study away. You can spend a semester at another member university in the U.S.A. There are several universities in the NSE program that offer undergraduate classes in SLP. Follow this link and then select "Communication Disorders" from the drop-down list of Majors; <https://nse.org/exchange/majors/>.

For more information about the program, please review the Iowa State NSE website: <https://www.nse.dso.iastate.edu/>. For information about specific universities and classes we recommend through the NSE program, contact Isabella Perksen, [iperksen@iastate.edu](mailto:iperksen@iastate.edu).

## **Study Abroad Options**

Another option might be to study abroad. You may consider going to another English-speaking country to gain some of the common prerequisites. Additionally, you may consider study abroad to get a foreign language immersion experience to expand your language skills and experience. This could also strength your application.

To learn more, please check out this website:

<https://www.studyabroad.iastate.edu/>.

## **Online Course Options**

If none of the above options work for you, you can take these courses online through other universities. Plan ahead by visiting other universities' websites and contacting them so that you complete these courses before you graduate from ISU. Consider connecting with other students about their experiences with online courses. You can connect with other students interested in SLP through the Communication Disorders Club at ISU.

Below are a few universities to consider, but please note this list is not comprehensive and there may be other options.

Utah State University: <https://comdde.usu.edu/programs/online/non-degree-seeking>

University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire:

<https://www.uwec.edu/academics/college-educationhuman-sciences/departmentsprograms/communication-sciencesdisorders/academic-offerings/post-baccalaureatecourses>

Longwood University: <https://www.longwood.edu/slponline/>

## *Year by Year Suggestions*

### **Freshman and Sophomore Years**

- Meet with your advisor and plan courses you will need to take next three or four years.
- Consider taking ASL or spoken language classes. This can be beneficial for your applications and future professional experiences!
- Get Involved!
  - Become involved with Communication Disorders Club, a club specifically for students with an interest in pursuing Speech-Language Pathology.
  - Be active in student organizations such as Linguistics Club, Psychology Club, etc.
  - Volunteer. Explore opportunities on-campus and off-campus.
  - Job-Shadow
    - Contact speech-language pathologists and/or audiologists in your hometown to see if you can job-shadow during semester breaks.
    - Contact Mary Greeley Hospital, On With Life, ChildServe, Heartland AEA, and other agencies to apply for job-shadowing or volunteering while in Ames.
- Pay Attention to Your Grades
  - Be sure to keep your grades as high as possible in all courses you take, and aim for a GPA over 3.0
- Start Saving Money
  - Consider opening a savings account to pay for campus visits and grad school applications. Applying to several grad programs can be expensive.

### **Junior Year**

- Start Your List of Programs
  - In the fall of junior year, make a list of about 10 to 15 graduate programs you would like to apply to, while considering:
    - Location
    - Cost
    - Coursework requirements
    - GPA and GRE scores of admitted applicants

- Explore Research Opportunities and Build Connections with Professors
  - Contact professors in Linguistics and Psychology for research opportunities
- Prepare for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
  - Start studying for the GRE, if you have graduate programs that require it.
  - Summer and semester breaks are best for reviewing vocabulary, mathematics, and writing.
  - Search Internet for tips, books, and online review programs.
  - Take practice GRE exams.
  - Take the GRE during the summer between your junior and senior year so that, if necessary, you can take it again before applying to grad schools.
- Continue to get involved in student organizations, volunteering, internship, etc.

## Senior Year

- Create Your Short List of Programs
  - Prepare a short list of 6 to 8 grad programs from your earlier list of 10 to 15 programs during the semester break before your senior year.
  - The list should be match between your GPA and GRE scores and the program entrance requirements.
  - Create an Excel sheet that shows a variety of information such as:
    - Application due dates
    - Required undergraduate courses
    - Whether the program uses the CSDCAS or some other portal for receiving applications and related documents
    - Guidelines for personal statements (if provided).
- Prepare Application Materials
  - Prepare or update your résumé with help from the LAS Career Services
  - Write the personal statement tailoring it to the first school on your list.

- Begin this process early in the senior year and get help from a Writing and Communication Consultant or from LAS Career Services.
- Request Letters of Recommendation
  - Request letters from professors and speech-language pathologists with whom you have taken courses and/or worked professionally.
  - Give them at least four weeks to write letters and ask them what information they need from you to do that.

## *Additional Resources and Websites*

### Resources at ISU:

- Academic Success Center, <https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/>.
- Writing and Communication Consultations (at ASC), <https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/writingsuccess>
- LAS Career Services, <https://careers.las.iastate.edu/>
- ISU National Student Exchange, <https://www.nse.dso.iastate.edu/>
- LAS Study Abroad, <https://abroad.las.iastate.edu/>
- ISU Communication Disorders Club, <https://www.stuorg.iastate.edu/comdisclub>

### Additional Resources

- ASHA Website, <https://www.asha.org/>
- ASHA EdFind, <https://find.asha.org/ed/#sort=relevancy>

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