

## PhD in Communication Sciences and Disorders Program in Audiology

### I. Program Goals and Overview

- a. Description: A description of the [PhD program](#) appears in the Graduate Catalog of the University of Memphis and can also be accessed via the School's website. The information contained in the Graduate Catalog will not be repeated here. In addition, features of the PhD Program that overlap with aspects of the MA and AuD programs are detailed in earlier sections of this Handbook.
- b. Collaborative, nurturing intellectual community: The School supports and implements highly interactive PhD training, involving close mentorship and student collaboration with both faculty and other students. Collaboration fosters networking, research productivity, and diverse methodological training. Consistent with the School's [mission statement](#), the program places priority on PhD training for post-doctoral study and/or academic positions within the discipline with significant potential impact in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders.
- c. Flexibility and Individualization: Aside from Core Requirements, there is no standard curriculum for students enrolled in the PhD program. Coursework is tailored for the individual student and is designed to maximize the student's training in their research area. General graduation requirements imposed by the University are described in the [Graduate Catalog](#).
- d. The PhD Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders has three concentrations: (i) Hearing Sciences and Disorders; (ii) Speech-Language Sciences and Disorders; (iii) Neuroscience. The PhD program descriptions are identical.
- e. Role of the faculty mentor: The program has as a primary objective to train the next generation of academicians in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Consequently, the PhD program places a primary emphasis on the interaction between each student and a primary faculty Mentor. Acceptance into the PhD program is predicated on finding a "fit" between the prospective PhD student and a current member of the tenure-track faculty. Students are only admitted when there is a faculty member willing to serve as primary Mentor. Since the expertise of the faculty does not encompass every area within Communication Sciences and Disorders, students whose primary areas of interest do not overlap with the expertise of a faculty member are counseled to apply elsewhere.

### II. Decision-making in the PhD Program

- a. Role of the Dean and faculty in governing the PhD program. Activities of the PhD Program are the responsibility of the tenure-track faculty along with the Dean and the Associate Dean. Further, each student has a designated Mentor, and by the second semester after enrollment, a Planning Committee ([see Section F below](#)). The Mentor, the Planning Committee, and ultimately the Dissertation Committee have the primary responsibility for the supervision of each PhD student's individual education.

- b. Associate Dean of Academic Programs. The Associate Dean of Academic Programs provides formal letters of offer of admission. They also serve as the day-to-day contact with the upper administration and Graduate School regarding admissions, retention, and funding for graduate students.
- c. PhD Program Committee (PPC). Coordination of most of the day-to-day functions of the PhD program are managed by the PPC (a standing committee in the School) and other members of the academic faculty. The primary purposes of the PPC include:
  - i. Corresponding with applicants to the program and maintenance of information about inquiries from potential applicants.
  - ii. Coordinating active recruitment efforts.
  - iii. Arranging review of applications for admission and decisions about funding for PhD students seeking program level funding or certain other competitive fellowships such as the Van Vleet Scholarship. Grant funding is decided by primary investigators of externally funded projects.
  - iv. Arranging Annual Evaluations of PhD Students.
  - v. Supplying the Associate Dean of Academic Programs with follow-up information needed for evaluation letters to students and admission/funding letters.
  - vi. Helping the Dean and Associate Dean of Academic Programs to ensure the regular offering of appropriate Professional Preparation courses (each is 1 - cr).
  - vii. Arranging orientation for new PhD students for introduction to both faculty and current PhD students.
  - viii. Assisting in coordinating the PhD student colloquium.
  - ix. Assisting in arranging social activities for the PhD program.
- d. Assumed Background at Admission
  - i. There is no requirement in the program for a student to have a background in Communication Sciences and Disorders, only that the student have successfully completed an undergraduate degree. Backgrounds of our PhD students have included Communication Sciences and Disorders, Psychology, Cognitive Science, Linguistics, Engineering, Education, and Music. Students admitted to the program are required to have an academic Mentor who is a tenure- track research faculty member in the program and a Full member of the [Graduate Faculty](#) in order to chair the Dissertation Committee.
- e. General Program Requirements
  - i. Information about Core Course Requirements (AUSP 8008, 8021, 8400, and 8010 or 8020), Research Tools, Collateral Area, the Pre-Candidacy Research Project, and Additional Requirements including admission, retention, and dissertation requirements are described in the CSD [Graduate Catalog](#).
- f. Full-time status
  - i. Full-time status for the Fall/Spring is  $\geq 9$  credit hours with a maximum of 15 credit hours. A minimum of 1 hour is required in Summer with maximum of 12 credit hours.

- ii. University-funded GAs must register for at least 9 hrs. per semester (or 3 thesis/dissertation hours after passing the Comprehensive Exam) in both the Fall and Spring terms.
  - iii. Graduate students must enroll in no fewer than 9 hrs. in the Fall and Spring and 1 hr. in the summer term.
  - iv. Requests for credit-hour overloads must be approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs.
- g. Other features of the PhD program
  - i. Planning Committee: A key factor for each PhD student is the [Planning Committee](#), a description of which can be found at the sites for the [concentration in Speech-Language Sciences and Disorders](#), [concentration in Hearing Sciences and Disorders](#), or [concentration in Neuroscience](#). The Planning Committee, in consultation with the PhD student, evaluates the student's academic needs and assists in the planning of the student's academic program. This plan, tailored to the students' needs, becomes an individualized program that is designed for that student. The academic plan is filed in the student's electronic file on the J drive within the first year (3 semesters) of the program. The plan is maintained and updated as necessary if changes are made after first filing. Changes must be approved by the Planning Committee.
  - ii. Comprehensive Examination: This committee should be formed by the student and Mentor within the last year of coursework, with membership expertise that covers the main elements of the Plan of Study. Committee membership must include at least 3 CSD faculty and one faculty from an outside academic unit. It is typical for comps coverage to include expertise in area of concentration, foundations from which the student would be teaching, research tools and collateral areas, and sometimes also consideration of dissertation goals. The comprehensive planning committee should meet at least one semester before the examinations begin to review the student's comps plan and coverage (e.g., examiners' topic areas and hours per topic), scope and cohesion of projects, and the deliverables for each written and oral component. The plan is ratified by filing the Comprehensive Examination Planning form.
  - iii. The purpose of comprehensives is to determine mastery and broad understanding of the theoretical and empirical issues in contemporary speech-hearing sciences. A detailed description of the exam is found in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The examination entails 24 hours of evaluation, 15 of which may be in the form of hands-on projects and research tools (e.g., laboratory experiment, data analysis, scholarly paper(s), grant proposal, course development). Each project (typically 3-6 hrs) must be approved by the overseeing faculty committee member. It is imperative the student and faculty formulate a plan and what constitutes an acceptable "turn-in item" for the project (e.g., extent of data analysis, review paper, presentation at orals, manuscript submission, grant submission) at the planning meeting. Comps projects with sufficient scope will at minimum require a full

semester (or more) to complete. Each project/practical component must be concluded during the last semester of coursework to be counted toward the Comprehensive Examination. The exam should be scheduled with project completion in mind; only in rare cases should projects extend beyond the exam date.

- iv. To allow for a clean break to candidacy and the initiation of dissertation credit hours, the comprehensive exam should be concluded during the last semester of completing academic requirements. The oral exam must occur within 3 weeks following the written exams. This means that students should plan to take their comprehensive exams (written + orals) within the last month of final term listed on their Plan of Study.
- v. Prospectus: The dissertation should comprise original research as proposed in the prospectus and approved by the Dissertation Committee. The prospectus should be submitted shortly after the comprehensive exams and be approved prior to initiating the dissertation work. The prospectus is typically defended ~1 year before the final dissertation defense. The document format must include a thorough literature review of the theoretical and empirical work related to the research topic, details of the methods, analysis plan and statistics to be used, and hypothesis/predicted outcomes. The prospectus is one of the few times faculty can offer constructive feedback on the student's dissertation plan. As such, it will generally be treated as a significant milestone in the tenure of the PhD program.
- vi. Dissertation: The Dissertation Committee consists of a minimum of 4 faculty members selected by the student in consultation with the dissertation chair (usually the students' Faculty Mentor). At least 2 of the members must be from the School and at least 1 member must be from a department outside the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The chairperson of the dissertation committee must be from the School and must be a full member of the [graduate faculty](#). Details of the dissertation process, dissertation document guidelines, and dissertation submission are found in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and the [Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Guide](#).
  - 1. Deviations in experimental design, scope, methodological techniques, etc., from the prospectus plan should be approved by the Dissertation Chair in consultation with committee membership.
  - 2. To allow ample time for faculty review, students should submit their dissertation document to their committee no later than 2 weeks before the oral defense. Faculty requesting revisions should return edits to the student within 1 week following the defense to allow adequate time for revision. Significant alterations (e.g., running new experiments, collecting additional data) may be unrealistic in the timeframe before dissertation submission. Therefore, faculty must be reasonable in requesting substantial modifications that fall

outside the scope of work as initially approved at the time of the prospectus.

3. Thesis announcement. Students defending their dissertation should complete the form through the Graduate School's website at least 3 weeks prior to the dissertation defense.

[https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6A3iFZELrGYXohf](https://memphis.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6A3iFZELrGYXohf)

- vii. Collateral Area: A minimum of 9 hours in coursework outside the School must be taken toward completing the PhD. This Collateral Area is tailored to each student's unique interests.
- viii. Students satisfy this requirement with a sequence of courses at the University of Memphis or other local institutions (e.g., UTHSC Neurosciences courses). Other students fulfill their Collateral via a [Graduate Certification in Cognitive Science](#). The collateral area requirement can be waived for a student entering with a Master's degree in a field related to Audiology or Speech-Language Pathology or if the student's outside coursework is considered sufficient by the Planning Committee.
- h. Research Assignments: Students are given a 20-hour/week research assignment each semester. By working in the research environment with the Mentor and other members of the doctoral faculty, the mentoring relation between PhD students and faculty is further enhanced.
- i. The philosophy of the doctoral faculty is that the education of the PhD student takes place as much in the research laboratory as it does in the classroom. The interaction between the PhD student, the doctoral faculty, and fellow students is critical to the development of the future researcher.
- j. Annual Evaluation: For each student enrolled in the PhD program for at least two semesters, an Annual Evaluation is undertaken in the Spring of each year (usually in May) that involves all members of the tenure-track faculty. This evaluation addresses the desired outcomes for each student consistent with the graduation requirements and with the planning document on file with approval of the Planning Committee. Prior to the Annual Evaluation meeting, each PhD student is instructed to review their plan of study to ensure that it is up to date.
- k. Completion of each required step of the PhD program is documented with a form, which is signed by the appropriate committee members. Students are responsible for transmitting the forms to the Dean's Administrative Associate as milestones are completed. Students can access their individual student folder on J-drive.
- l. PhD Database: In preparation for the Annual Evaluation, students should review their course and milestone progress with their primary advisor in UM Degree. In addition, students should document their scholarly accomplishments in the format provided by their advisor and review on a regular basis.

- m. Scholarly activities (e.g., publications, presentations, grants) should be listed based on work completed at the University of Memphis (only). Additionally, PhD students should complete a Planning Narrative for the coming year. The narrative should not be a summary of the past year's accomplishments but is meant to describe planned research activities for the coming academic year.
- n. The Annual Evaluation takes account of each student's progress in the PhD program, with the student's primary mentor leading the discussion of that student's progress. At the conclusion of the Annual Evaluation, a letter is sent to each student which summarizes the outcome of the review and is signed by the student's Mentor and the Associate Dean of Academic Programs.
- o. The PhD Student Colloquium: In the fall and spring semesters a PhD student organizes a "brown bag" colloquium series, attended by School faculty, students, and outside departments. The colloquium serves as a platform to facilitate collaboration, diversify methodological training, and foster community within the School. Speaker preference is given to current PhD students, who use the colloquium as a medium to present their Research. Priority is given to students presenting their Pre- candidacy Research Projects. Although priority is given to students presenting their pre-candidacy Research Projects, all PhD students are encouraged to present research regularly at various stages of completion. CSD Faculty and ancillary outside speakers provide the remainder of the talks each semester.
  - i. The PhD Student Colloquium meets Fridays at 12 pm in the fall and spring semesters.
- p. Teaching opportunities (examples):
  - i. A USP 8400- Teaching Experience is a course that provides mentored teaching experience for PhD students in giving lectures, preparing tests, grading, and/or student advising. Students are supervised by the faculty instructor. This course may be taken for variable credit (min 1 cr. required). However, the objectives of the teaching experience should minimally include hands-on practice with (1) teaching/lecturing in front of a class, (2) grading/assessment, and (3) interacting with students (e.g., office hours, fielding questions).
  - ii. PhD students may be able, with appropriate prior experience and approval of the Planning Committee, Dean, and Graduate School, to teach as instructors of record in the School's undergraduate courses, under the supervision of a faculty member. Current undergraduate offerings include: A USP 4106: Introduction to Audiology; A USP 4300: Autism: Socialization & Communication; and A USP 4010: Introduction to Functional Neuroscience.
  - iii. Professional Prep Courses: As part of the Core Requirements, PhD students must take a minimum of 3 credit hours of A USP 8021 – Professional Preparation for Scientists. The goal of these courses are to help prepare PhD students for their eventual role in science and academia. These courses are offered semi-regularly by rotating faculty based on the interests and professional needs of the PhD student cohort. Past seminar themes have

included grant writing, scientific publishing and peer review, understanding tenure & promotion, responsible conduct in research, and teaching.

- iv. Required Forms: A [series of forms](#) must be logged over the course of a PhD student's tenure after completion of each major program requirement (e.g., Pre-candidacy Project, Oral Exams, Comprehensive Examination Plan). These forms are submitted to the Dean's Administrative Associate and retained in the student's file (located here). Each year, the Ph.D. Program Committee conducts an Annual Evaluation of each PhD student, and it is the student's responsibility to be sure that the necessary information is included in their file.
- q. PhD students are also required to file a separate SACs Outcomes Tracking form (see forms folder) for each program milestone (i.e., pre-candidacy project, comps exams, prospectus, dissertation defense). Speak to your mentor if they (and the corresponding committee) have not completed this rating form for a given milestone.
- r. Financial Assistance: see section 1.9 Financial Assistance.