

What can I do with a degree in...

# COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

## What is **COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS?**

A degree in communication sciences and disorders focuses on the basics of understanding speech, language, swallowing, and hearing processes. Careers focus on assessing and treating persons with speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders, educating individuals about alternative communication systems and their use and performing research related to speech and language problems.

WCU's undergraduate program in Communication Sciences and Disorders has been recognized nationally as a top program due to its focus on experiential training as well as its globally recognized faculty members. Professor David Shapiro was recently recognized with a top University of North Carolina system honor for his global impact as a teacher and researcher in the field of stuttering.

## What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

**Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Communication Sciences and Disorders**

**Master of Science (M.S.) in Speech-Language Pathology**

## What is the **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Any currently enrolled student at WCU may declare Communication Sciences and Disorders as an undergraduate major by visiting the Advising Center and filling out the proper paperwork. There is no formal application process for declaring a CSD undergraduate major. However, the master's program in speech-lan-



guage pathology is highly competitive and is required for most career paths within this field. [Review admission requirements for WCU's M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology before applying.](#)

## What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Many of our graduates move on to work in speech-language pathology careers including research, audiologist, audiology technician, speech-language pathologist, and speech-language pathologist assistant.

Please note that most of these careers require an [advanced degree](#), as well as certification and licensing. Talk with your academic advisor or a ca-

reer counselor to choose which career path is for you.

## Who employs **COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS graduates?**

Our graduates work in a variety of work settings including hospitals, children's hospitals, elementary and secondary schools, private practices, nursing and residential care facilities, community clinics, and rehabilitation centers.

# MAJOR MAP

**How to use this map:** Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

## 1st YEAR

## 2nd YEAR

### EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Coursework your first year will focus mostly on liberal study requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

The second year continues with the liberal arts requirements but introduces CSD with CSD 270: Introduction to Communication Disorders and CSD 272: Fundamentals of Speech and Language Analysis. Check out the [8-Semester Plan and consult with your advisor](#).

### GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

Most SLP career paths require a graduate degree. Your second year is a great time to start thinking about hands-on experiences you'll need for graduate school admissions such as job shadowing experiences.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to [JobCat 2.0](#).

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete

### BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage and recognize students who are connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

If you want to [study abroad](#), this is a good year to have that experience. You might also consider a global internship such as [Therapy Abroad](#) or [CIS Abroad](#).

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Vault](#), [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Attend the [Catamount Career and Networking Day](#) to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on opportunities.

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years; label your spreadsheet with each school's admission requirements and application materials so that you are aware of the expectations.

# Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Inclusive Education  
Psychology  
Sociology  
Spanish

## 3rd YEAR

Courses in your third year will focus heavily on CSD topics including phonetics, and speech and language development. Review [8-Semester Plan with your advisor](#) for more information.

Volunteer with nonprofits that focus on your ideal population. For example, if you know you want to work with children, seek volunteer opportunities such as the [Big Brother Big Sister of Haywood County program](#).

Consider networking with professionals in your field. [The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#) has numerous networking events listed.

Start your observation hours with an ASHA-certified SLP.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Connect and participate in the student chapter of National Student Speech Language Hearing Association.

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the MCAT, GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

## 4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will continue to focus exclusively on CSD topics including audiology, aural rehabilitation and the clinical process. Be sure to review the [8-semester plan](#), make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs or graduate school admissions. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#).

Network with employers and non-profits at the [Catamount Career and Networking Days](#).

Continue observing an ASHA-certified SLP for graduate school admissions.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and [apply for jobs](#) between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by visiting the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

# MORE INFORMATION

## **OBSERVATION** Information

Students are encouraged to observe often throughout their undergraduate and graduate program, since observations provide valuable learning opportunities at all levels of experience. The CSD Program requires observation hours in several undergraduate courses. Observation hours must be supervised by an ASHA certified SLP or AUD. If supervision is not done by a WCU CSD Department faculty member, a copy of the observed clinician's ASHA card must be attached to the observation sheet that contains such hours.

Although not required to complete the undergraduate program, students must observe an ASHA-certified SLP for a minimum of 25 hours before the end of their first semester of graduate study. Graduate students who do not meet this requirement may not enroll in CSD 683 Clinical Practicum until they have completed the minimum number of observation hours.

## **SKILLS LEARNED** in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- listening skills
- information handling and organization
- critical thinking skills
- oral and written communication
- problem solving
- technical skills
- teamwork
- patience

## **KNOWLEDGE** Base

This program will prepare students to:

- Understand the development of anatomical and functional processes specific to normal speech, hearing, and language acquisition, and the normal swallow.
- Use knowledge of disorders and differences of speech, language, and swallowing to build a strong understanding of normal processes.
- Understand contemporary issues in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders including but not limited to professionalism, cultural competence, nondiscriminatory practice, technological advances, and evidence-based service delivery.
- Evaluate research and treatment methods in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

## Professional **RESOURCES**

- Communication Service for Deaf: [www.csd.org](http://www.csd.org)
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: [www.asha.org/Students/Speech-Language-Pathology](http://www.asha.org/Students/Speech-Language-Pathology)
- American Academy of Private Practice in Speech Pathology and Audiology: [www.aappspa.org](http://www.aappspa.org)
- National Student Speech Language Hearing Association: [www.asha.org/nsslha](http://www.asha.org/nsslha)

## **QUESTIONS?**

For questions, please call the Communication Sciences and Disorders program at 828-227-7165 or visit [csd.wcu.edu](http://csd.wcu.edu).

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or [careerservices@wcu.edu](mailto:careerservices@wcu.edu).