What can I do with a degree in...

COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

Why study **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 it's focus on experiential training as well as it's globally recognized faculty members. Students receive hands-on training in the Speech and Hearing Clinic, which serves approximately 75 clients a week and provides a valuable health service to the community.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

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

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

There is also a minor in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

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-language 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 speech-language pathologist, and speech-language pathologist assistant, research, audiologist, and audiology technician.

Please note that most of these careers require an **advanced degree,** as well as certification and licensing. Talk with your academic advisor or a career counselor for more information.

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: Professional Writing in CSD. 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. See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.	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. Start your observation hours with an ASHA-certified SLP. 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 **Spark 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, **Focus 2,** and **Onet Online.** Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.	Attend the **CCPD Career Fairs** to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on opportunities. 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:

English
Inclusive Education
Psychology
Sociology
Spanish

3rd YEAR	4th 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.	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!**
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.** Another great opportunity would be to work with the University Participant Program. Consider networking with professionals in your field. **The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association** has numerous networking events listed.	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.
Connect with alumni in your field through **LinkedIn** Connect and participate in the student chapter of National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. Continue observing an ASHA-certified SLP for graduate school admissions.	Join professional organizations such as the **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.** Network with employers and non-profits at the **CCPD Career Fairs.** Continue observing an ASHA-certified SLP for graduate school admissions.
Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the **Writing and Learning Commons** for GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions.Take the GRE, etc. Use **Big Interview** to learn more about professional interviews. Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.	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 vising the **CCPD.**

DID YOU KNOW? Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 50,000 employers)

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 oganization
- 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
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: www.asha.org/Students/Speech-Language-Pathology
- American Academy of Private Practice in Speech Pathology and Audiology: www.aappspa.org
- National Student Speech Language Hearing Association: www.asha.org/nsslha

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Communication Sciences and Disorders program at 828-227-3381 or visit 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.

Western Carolina UNIVERSITY