**Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences**

**General Description**

The Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) Department strives to educate scientists who are committed to advancing the knowledge base pertaining to the communicatively-disordered population and to effectively evaluate the clinical processes employed. To accomplish this, all curricula have a solid scientific base, with course content and clinical practicum experiences presented from a theoretical and experimental orientation.

Consistent with the research nature of the Ph.D. degree and the department’s emphasis on clinical training, the major objective is to develop scientists who (a) are well-grounded in the scientific method as it applies to the clinical and laboratory setting, (b) possess a comprehensive knowledge of the essential aspects of normal and disordered communication, and also (c) possess a comprehensive knowledge of their area of specialization.

**Facilities**

The SLHS department is housed in the 30,000 square foot Phillips Communication Sciences Building. The UCONN Speech and Hearing Clinic occupies the ground floor along with SLHS research labs, and the UCONN Brain Imaging Research Center (BIRC). The BIRC is home to an MRI scanner devoted to multi-disciplinary basic science and translational research.

The building has excellent equipment and materials for clinical practice and behavioral research. Each clinical room is equipped for observation and audio and video monitoring. One larger room is equipped for and dedicated to telepractice. Three audiological test suites are outfitted with up-to-date testing instruments for diagnostic and hearing aid applications. Six research labs are also located on this floor, five of which have recently been renovated and all contain state of the art equipment. The second floor consists of office space, a graduate student room, a conference room, two clinical suites for remote observation, and additional research labs.

SLHS is an active participant in the Cognitive Science Program and is involved with numerous cross-disciplinary research endeavors with the Linguistics, and Psychological Sciences departments and the Connecticut Institute for Brain and Cognitive Sciences (IBaCS). These affiliations afford SLHS researchers access to labs in those departments and as well as shared laboratory and meeting spaces in the Arjona Building, the current home of the Cognitive Science Program. In addition, the following off-campus facilities offer further research opportunities for graduate students and faculty:

- Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. [http://www.connecticutchildrens.org](http://www.connecticutchildrens.org)
- Gaylord Hospital. [http://www.gaylord.org](http://www.gaylord.org)
- Haskins Laboratories. [http://www.haskins.yale.edu/](http://www.haskins.yale.edu/)
- Hospital for Special Care. [http://hfsc.org](http://hfsc.org)
- University of Connecticut Health Center. [http://www.uchc.edu](http://www.uchc.edu)
ADMISSION

Information about the SLHS admissions process can be found in the Graduate Catalog at http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/fields-of-study/speech-language-and-hearing-sciences/. Requirements for admission are in accordance with the requirements established by the Graduate School http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/guidelines-for-grad-study/admissions/. In addition, the SLHS Department strongly recommends that applicants have Graduate Record Examination scores above 300 (Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning combined) and 4 or higher on Analytical Writing, an excellent scholastic record, and three letters of recommendation.

English language proficiency is required for all international graduate applicants. The minimum standard to qualify for Regular admission is: 79 (Internet-based test – iBT), or 550 (Old Paper-based test – PBT), or 22/30 on each of the Listening, Reading, and Writing sections (New Paper-based test- PBT) or higher on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language, or a score of 6.5 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or a score of 53 on the PTE test. Those admitted on F-1 visas must be fully academically admissible as a Regular student (see above). Applicants may also meet the language requirement by receiving a Certificate of English Proficiency from UCONN English Language Institute (UCAELI).

STUDENT BACKGROUND

Prior to matriculation into the Ph.D. program, students intending to pursue a Ph.D. in SLHS ordinarily will have completed a master's degree in speech-language pathology or a related field; students intending to pursue a Ph.D. in audiology ordinarily will have a bachelor’s degree in SLHS and/or an Au.D. A student without a master's degree or with a degree in a different field may take other coursework designed to provide a background in normal and disordered aspects of communication. A student who wishes to pursue clinical certification in speech/language pathology or audiology must apply separately to either the M.A.-SLP or Au.D. program. Admission to the Ph.D. program does not guarantee admission to the clinical program; likewise, admission to the M.A.-SLP or Au.D. programs does not guarantee admission to the Ph.D. program. It is recommended that students who are interested in pursuing a dual Au.D/Ph.D. apply to the Ph.D. after their first semester of matriculation in the Au.D. program.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The department attempts to provide financial aid to all doctoral students throughout their program, up to four years for students with a Master’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology or a Doctor of Audiology degree and up to seven years for students who enter the program with no background in the field. It is important to note that funding for any doctoral student is merit-based and that the basis for continued funding is that the student is staying on track academically and in their research activities. Eligibility for funding is re-evaluated at the end of each academic year. Students working outside of the university are not eligible for departmental funding.

Funding typically comes from teaching assistantships. Other potential sources of funding are:
- Federal Training Grants  
- Faculty Research Grants  
- Graduate School Fellowships  
- Special Merit Awards  
- Dissertation (Extraordinary) Expenses Award  
- Foundation Grants  
- Work Study Positions

**Residency**

The graduate student can fulfill the special demands of a doctoral program only by devoting a continuous period of time to concentrated study with a minimum of outside distraction or employment. The SLHS department expects that students with departmental funding (working as a TA or RA) will devote at least three years of full-time study on the Storrs campus.

**Course Requirements and Curriculum**

The program for each student will consist of graduate courses designed to provide foundation knowledge in the important issues of normal and disordered speech, language and hearing. In addition, students take electives appropriate to their chosen concentration, and train in advanced methods necessary for research in this field.

- **The Foundations requirement** consists of three courses on normal and disordered speech, language and hearing. At least two of these courses must be drawn from the SLHS graduate curriculum. Courses completed as part of an MA-SLP or Au.D. degree may fulfill this requirement with the approval of the student’s advisory committee. **(9 credits)**

- **The Electives requirement** consists of at least three courses related to the chosen concentration. These electives are selected in consultation with the primary advisor, from such departments as anthropology, cognitive science, computer science, linguistics, neurosciences, and psychology but may also be selected from SLHS. Students are encouraged to consider completing a graduate certificate in Cognitive Science ([http://cogsci.uconn.edu/graduate-certificate-requirements/](http://cogsci.uconn.edu/graduate-certificate-requirements/)) and/or the graduate certificate in Quantitative Research Methods ([http://psych.uconn.edu/certificates/qrm_cert.php/](http://psych.uconn.edu/certificates/qrm_cert.php/)), both of which fulfill the electives requirement. Additional elective options include coursework pertaining to advanced research methods, for example eye tracking, evoked response potential (ERP), neuroimaging, or neural modeling. With prior approval of the primary advisor, an elective requirement may be fulfilled through attendance at an advanced workshop for example, [https://www.nmr.mgh.harvard.edu/training/courses](https://www.nmr.mgh.harvard.edu/training/courses) or [https://starkeypro.com/education-training/training-classes](https://starkeypro.com/education-training/training-classes) or [http://visceralmind.bangor.ac.uk/](http://visceralmind.bangor.ac.uk/) **(9 credits)**

- **The Tools requirement** consists of:
  - Grant writing class **(3 credits)**
  - Three courses in research design, statistics, and possibly computer programming. Courses are available in the Educational Psychology, Psychology, or Statistics
departments. Each department has a recommended three-course sequence (e.g., EDSY 5605, 5607, 5610 or 5613; STAT 5505, 5605, 5665). (9 credits)

**Research Requirement**

Each doctoral student is expected to be registered for SLHS 6319 and involved in research activity every semester, which will be reviewed each semester by the student’s advisory committee.

**Laboratory Rotations**

In order to obtain experience in different research methodologies, each student will be required to complete at least one laboratory rotation, lasting a minimum of one semester. During the rotation, students will enroll in SLHS 6319 (Research practicum) with that lab director. The laboratory rotation must be approved by the student’s advisor. At the end of the laboratory rotation it is expected that the student will have completed or contributed to the completion of a project as described below.

**Projects**

Students are expected to be engaged in research throughout their graduate training, beginning in the first semester. Research involves experiment design, data collection and analysis, preparation of a potentially publishable manuscript, and an oral presentation of the research findings. Students will be encouraged to submit their projects for presentation at professional meetings and to submit them to an appropriate journal for publication.

**Total Credits**

The total number of credits taken by a student will vary. However, the Graduate School requires a minimum of 30 credits of content coursework beyond the baccalaureate (or its equivalent) or at least 15 credits of content coursework beyond the master’s degree in the same or a closely related field of study (exclusive of any required Related Area). A plan of study should be completed, signed by the student and advisory committee members, and reviewed by the SLHS Ph.D. Committee. The plan of study is submitted to the Graduate School for approval prior to the end of the first year of study.

**Role of the Advisory Committee in Program Planning**

Each student will have an Advisory Committee made up of the Major Advisor and at least two Associate Advisors.

1. **Selection of the committee:**
   - During the admission process, the student selects a Major Advisor based upon his or her area of interest. The faculty member must agree to mentor the student.
   - A minimum of two Associate Advisor(s) will be selected by the student in consultation with the Major Advisor before filing a plan of study and before the beginning of the 2nd year in the program.
As a student’s interests become focused on a particular specialization, it may be appropriate for the student to request a change of Major and/or Associate Advisor(s).

2. Role of the committee:
   - Plan the student's academic program (Plan of Study) consistent with the student's educational goals and the departmental guidelines.
   - Approve all Plan of Study changes.
   - Determine the format of the student's General Examination and make a final decision on exam outcome, taking into account additional faculty members’ comments that are part of the examining committee.
   - The Advisory Committee will review the student’s progress annually and the Major Advisor will provide written feedback to the student based on this evaluation.
   - The major advisor will present progress reports to the faculty.

3. Change of Advisors
   - It is required that the written consent of the Dean of the Graduate School be obtained before any changes may be made in the membership of a duly established advisory committee. Forms for the request of a major and/or associate advisors change may be obtained from the departmental Administrative Assistant.

**General Examination**

The general examination may be taken when 75% of the courses on the filed Plan of Study is completed. The General Exam may not be undertaken prior to approval of the plan of study. The examination will ordinarily be passed within four years of the beginning of doctoral study or within three years if the student entered with a master's degree or Au.D. in the same field. Before arrangements for the examination may be made, the student will contact the Graduate Records Office to ensure all pre-examination requirements have been met. If they have, a permit to take the examination will be given to the student and a copy sent to the major advisor.

There are two formats for the general examination, traditional and alternate. The format of the general examination will be decided by the student’s advisory committee.

The traditional format will consist of a monitored written portion followed by an oral defense for clarifications of what was written. The written portion will typically be completed within a one-week period. Content of the exam will cover specialization in depth, area of concentration as it relates to the student’s plan of study, research methods, and other content (i.e., related or supporting area(s) of study). The examining committee includes at least one faculty member representing each of the major areas addressed in the examination. A minimum of five faculty members, including all members of the student’s advisory committee, must participate in the examination. The oral portion of the general exam will be scheduled after the written portion has been completed. The purpose of the oral exam is to explore areas of weakness from the written questions. All examiners are invited to submit questions and to evaluate answers, but the final decision as to whether or not the student has passed the examination shall rest solely with the advisory committee.

The alternate format for the general examination will consist of two components, written and oral. The written component will consist of a scholarly review of one or more issues related to student’s area of research under the direction of the major advisor. Topic of the review paper must be approved by the
student’s advisory committee. This integrative paper should be in a form and quality that may be submitted for publication. The oral component of the examination will consist of presentation of the review paper, including implications for a potential dissertation topic, to the advisory committee, SLHS faculty and others, as determined by the advisory committee. A minimum of five faculty members must be in attendance for the oral presentation. The final decision as to whether or not the student has passed the examination shall rest solely with the advisory committee.

TEACHING

Each student is required to engage in some form of classroom teaching during his or her doctoral program. This may include being the instructor of record for one course, serving as a TA for two courses and preparing a course syllabus for one of the courses, or another teaching experience as determined the student’s advisory committee.

Time Limits

All work must be completed within a period of eight (8) years from the beginning of the student’s matriculation in the degree program, or, if the student entered with a master’s degree in the same or a closely related field, the doctorate must be completed within seven (7) years. Failure to complete the work within the periods specified or failure to maintain Continuous Registration (http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/?s=continuous+registration) will require reevaluation of the student’s entire program and may result in a notice of termination.

A one-time extension of the student’s terminal date of no longer than two (2) years is considered only when there is substantial evidence that the student has made regular and consistent progress toward completion of degree requirements. A detailed recommendation to extend the terminal date must be signed by the major advisor and submitted in a timely manner to the Dean of the Graduate School for consideration.

ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN THE DISSERTATION

The student's advisory committee may serve as the student's dissertation committee. Any changes in the advisory committee must have the written consent of the Dean of the Graduate School. Forms for change of advisor may be obtained from the Graduate School http://grad.uconn.edu/current-students/forms/.

1. Role of the Committee:
   - Guide the student through all stages of the dissertation.
   - Give final approval of dissertation prospectus and final dissertation manuscript.
   - A minimum of five members of the faculty, including all members of the candidate's advisory committee, shall participate in the final examination unless approval for fewer faculty has been secured in advance from the Dean of the Graduate School.

2. Selection of the Committee: Student will request a major advisor upon application to the program.
   - Associate advisors are selected by the student in consultation with major advisor.
3. Make-up of the Committee:
   • The committee will consist of at least three members.
   • The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be full-time faculty members with a primary appointment as graduate faculty in the SLHS Department. Exceptions to this policy may be made by a majority vote of the graduate faculty in SLHS.

**The Dissertation Prospectus**

All doctoral students are required to prepare a dissertation prospectus before beginning their dissertation research. This prospectus will take the format of the Predoctoral Individual National Research Service Award (NRSA F31), and eligible students will be encouraged to submit their prospectus as a fellowship grant. Normally this will be completed by the end of their third year in the program.

- After the prospectus is written, a prospectus presentation and defense is scheduled. The announcement for the presentation and defense should be posted no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled time. Two copies of the prospectus should be filed with the departmental secretary. The student must have passed the General Examination prior to the prospectus presentation.

- The presentation will be chaired by the candidate's major advisor. Forty minutes are allotted for the presentation of the prospectus followed by questions from the advisory committee. After the committee has completed its questions and comments, further questions and comments will be solicited from other faculty and graduate students. A minimum of five faculty members must be in attendance for the oral presentation.

- After all questions have been addressed, the advisory committee will meet to discuss the suggestions, comments, and criticisms offered during the prospectus presentation. All interested faculty are invited to remain for this discussion.

- There are four possible outcomes to this meeting:
  - candidate is told to proceed,
  - candidate is advised to make certain minor modifications and then proceed,
  - candidate is advised to make major modifications,
    - In this instance, the advisory committee is re-convened after the candidate informs the major advisor that the modifications have been completed.
    - The major advisor then calls a meeting of the advisory committee, at which time the candidate presents the revised prospectus.
    - All interested faculty are invited to attend.
    - The advisory committee then votes whether or not the candidate should proceed with the proposed project or to select another topic.
  - candidate is advised to select another topic and present another prospectus, in which case the entire sequence of events is followed again.
1. As stated in the Graduate Catalog:

*The Dissertation Proposal, bearing the signatures of the members of the student’s advisory committee as well as the signature of the department or program head verifying satisfactory review by two (2) outside readers who are not members of the advisory committee, should be submitted to The Graduate School for final approval by the time the student has completed the ninth credit of GRAD 6950 or 6960. The Graduate School will not grant final approval of the Dissertation Proposal without proof of any required IRB. In any event, the approved Dissertation Proposal must be on file in The Graduate School before the public announcement of the oral defense of the dissertation.*

When the Dissertation Proposal has been completed and signed by the student and also approved by the members of the advisory committee, the proposal then is submitted to the head of the department or program to which the student was admitted. Reviewers may be appointed to evaluate an individual student’s proposal, or they may be appointed to a committee responsible for reviewing all proposals in a particular field of study or group of related fields of study.

Dissertation Proposals are reviewed with the following questions in mind:

1. Is the proposal well written, well organized, and well argued?
2. Does the proposal describe a project of appropriate scope?
3. Does the student demonstrate mastery of the method of investigation?
4. Does the student show awareness of the relevant research by others?
5. Does the student consider how the proposed investigation, if successful, will contribute to knowledge?

The department or program head’s signature on the proposal when the review is completed confirms that the results of the review were favorable. The evaluation may take the form of a reading of the proposal or attendance at an oral presentation and discussion of the proposal. A copy of the signed approval form and Dissertation Proposal must be received by The Graduate School when the review process has been completed. Receipt by The Graduate School of the approved Dissertation Proposal and any required IRB, IACUC, or SCRO approval is a basic requirement for eligibility to schedule the oral defense of the dissertation and for conferral of the doctoral degree.

**DISSERTATION**

*Candidacy, Dissertation Preparation, and Final Oral Defense*

Upon approval of the plan of study, passing the General Examination, and approval of the Dissertation Proposal by the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty Council, the student becomes a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A dissertation representing a significant contribution to ongoing research in the candidate’s field is a primary requirement. The preparation of the dissertation is under the immediate and continuous
supervision of the advisory committee, and it must meet all standards prescribed by the committee and by The Graduate School. It must be acceptable in literary style and organization. Specifications for its preparation may be obtained at The Graduate School or from The Graduate School website. It is the student’s ultimate responsibility to be certain that the dissertation conforms to the specifications.

The dissertation format involves the written presentation of original research carried out by the student under the guidance of the student’s dissertation committee.

The oral defense of the dissertation must be announced publically by means of the University events online calendar at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the defense. At this time, electronic tentative approval of the dissertation and an electronic working copy of the entire dissertation must be filed with The Graduate School (or with Health Center, if appropriate). A minimum of five (5) members of the faculty, including all members of the candidate’s advisory committee, must participate in the final examination, unless written approval for a lesser number has been secured in advance from the Dean of The Graduate School.

The decision regarding whether a candidate has passed, conditionally passed, or failed the examination rests solely with the advisory committee, which will take into account the opinions of other participating faculty members and other experts. The vote of the advisory committee must be unanimous. Following the examination, the major advisor communicates the results to the student and verifies that the official report has been completed and signed for submission to The Graduate School (or to the Health Center, if appropriate).

The abstract and dissertation must be dated as of the calendar year in which all requirements for the degree are completed. The Graduate School requires the electronic submission of the dissertation though Digital Commons, a University repository for public access. The final copy must meet all specifications outlined on The Graduate School website. The Dissertation Submission Checklist must be submitted to The Graduate School once it has been signed by a Homer D. Babbidge Library designated staff member together with an approval page bearing original signatures of all members of the advisory committee. Once a dissertation is bound, it becomes the property of the Homer D. Babbidge Library. No restrictions that limit or delay the accessibility, use, or distribution of the results of a doctoral student’s research are acceptable if such delays are inconsistent with an embargo period requested by the student or if they interfere with the timely completion of a student’s academic program.