The field of communication sciences and disorders (CSD) is comprised of two distinct professions: speech-language pathology and audiology. These professions are concerned with human communication and its disorders. A desire for a career in service is a primary motivation for students who study communication sciences and disorders.

Speech-language pathologists help prevent, identify, assess and provide treatment for communication and swallowing disorders — to improve outcomes and quality of life of the client and their families. These include language development, acquired language disorders, stuttering, and voice and articulation disorders. Disorders related to literacy also have become an area of focus for speech-language pathologists. Speech-language pathologists provide service to children and adults and work in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, rehabilitation agencies, nursing homes, private practice and private clinics such as the Saint Louis University Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic.

Audiologists help prevent, identify, assess and treat hearing disorders. They evaluate hearing, prescribe and dispense hearing aids, program cochlear implants, assess balance, assess and provide intervention for auditory processing disorders improve auditory skills to improve outcomes and quality of life of the client and their families. Audiologists are involved in hearing conservation (particularly in industry) as well as in monitoring nerve function during surgery. Audiologists work in a variety of settings, including physician offices, hospitals, rehabilitation agencies, nursing homes, private practice and schools.

Requirements for the degree include:
+ 25 credit hours of clinical observation
+ Capstone project
+ A minimum of 120 credit hours (51–63 hours from core curriculum in addition to 37–42 hours are required for the major)

All CSD courses must be completed with a grade of C or higher in order to count for the major. Students must have a 2.75 GPA in major coursework to be retained in the major and graduate.

Undergraduate students in communication sciences and disorders are encouraged to participate in research activities, either faculty-guided independent research or as a research assistant. Such activities provide learning experiences outside the classroom and serve to focus interest in the discipline. In addition to enriching the undergraduate curriculum, engaging in research is a valuable way to prepare for graduate studies.

All students in the program experience guided observation of adults and children with a variety of speech, language and hearing disorders. Undergraduate students meeting all pre-requisites have the opportunity to participate in an elective clinical practicum, typically done the second semester of their senior year, on-site at the Paul C. Reinert, S.J Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. There, they will begin to gain first-hand experience working with children and adults with communication disorders.

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ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Freshman: All applications are thoroughly and carefully reviewed. Solid academic performance in college preparatory course work is a primary criterion in reviewing a freshman applicant's file. College admission test scores (ACT or SAT) are used as an additional indicator of the student's ability to meet the University's academic requirements and to qualify the student for certain University scholarship programs. To be considered for admission to any Saint Louis University undergraduate program, the applicant must be approaching graduation from an accredited high school or have an acceptable score on the General Education Development (GED) test.

Transfer: Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited high school or have an acceptable score on the GED. An official high school transcript and official test scores are required only of those students who have attempted fewer than 24 transferable semester hours (or 30 quarter hours) of college credit. Those having completed 24 hours or more of college credit need only submit a transcript from previously attended college(s). In reviewing a transfer applicant's file, the office of admission holistically examines the student's academic performance in college-level coursework as an indicator of the student's ability to meet the academic rigors of Saint Louis University.

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAM?

Speech-language pathologists typically need a master's degree to practice. Most speech-language pathologists work in schools or health care facilities.

A doctoral degree (either a Ph.D. or an Au.D.) is required for audiologists entering the profession. Most audiologists work in health care facilities.

An undergraduate degree in communication sciences and disorders can also act as preparation for other professional degrees such as medicine, special education or public health.

For those not wishing to pursue an additional degree, one can practice as a speech-language pathology assistant in many states with a B.A. in communication sciences and disorders. Furthermore, some of our graduates have gotten jobs as research assistants or patient care advocates with a B.A. alone.

Speech-language pathology and audiology professions offer excellent opportunities for employment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for both professions is positive, with speech-language pathology listed as “faster than average growth” and audiology listed as “much faster than average growth” in the next decade. Forbes ranks audiologists and speech pathologists as the 5th and 10th best jobs of 2014, respectively.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

There are two principal ways to help finance a Saint Louis University education:

+ Scholarships: awarded based on academic achievement, service, leadership and financial need.
+ Financial Aid: provided in the form of grants and loans, some of which require repayment.

For priority consideration for merit-based scholarships, applicants should apply for admission by Dec. 1 and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1.

For information on other scholarships and financial aid, visit the student financial services office online at finaid.slu.edu.