

Graduate Students' Handbook

Communicative Disorders and Deaf Studies

California State University, Fresno

Revised: October 29, 2008

Introduction

The department offers a graduate program leading to an MA in Communicative Disorders and Deaf Studies with an option in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) and an option in Deaf Education (DE). The master's degree is considered essential for the professional training needed for effective practice in Deaf Education or Speech-Language Pathology. The master's degree generally involves about 2 years of full-time study.

Graduate Application Process for Admission

Application Requirements for the Dept. of Communicative Disorders & Deaf Studies

Deadlines for application to graduate studies in CDDS are as follows: February 1st and October 1st for Speech-Language Pathology. March 1st for Deaf Education.

Graduate Admission Requirements for the Department:

The graduate program is open to students with a bachelor's degree in communicative disorders. Applicants who have a degree in another field will be required to complete the undergraduate courses for their emphasis. Applicants must have demonstrated the ability to excel at an advanced level as well as indicated great potential for success in academic work and clinical work. In order to be considered for admission to the graduate program in CDDS, the applicant needs to submit the following:

1. Application to the university. Apply at www.csummentor.edu.
2. One official transcript from each college or university attended to the university.
3. One official report of GRE scores to the university.

After applying to the university you will be directed to the department application forms.¹

1. Application to the program.
2. Three letters of recommendation to the department).
3. Letter of Intent (to the department).

Students cleared as credential candidates by the department and the Kremen School of Education and Human Development are not automatically accepted into the department's graduate program.

Information for Post-Baccalaureate Students:

Students who have earned an undergraduate degree in a major other than Speech-Language Pathology or Deaf Education need to complete all the undergraduate prerequisite courses before they are admitted into the graduate program.

In order to be admitted into the university as a preprofessional, post-baccalaureate student, a student shall (1) have completed a 4-year college course of study and hold an acceptable baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association, or have completed equivalent academic preparation as determined by appropriate campus authorities; (2) be in good academic standing at the last college or university attended; and (3) have attained a grade point average of at least 2.5 (A=4.0) in the last 60 semester (90 quarter) units attempted.

Graduate Students' Orientation

All newly admitted graduate students are required to attend a mandatory orientation meeting held each semester during the week before or when classes start. This applies to Deaf Education and Speech-Language Pathology option students. Often the orientation is the first class session of CDDS 200.

Graduate Student Standing

Information for students admitted into the program with full classification status: This category is granted to those students who fully meet all university and program admission

¹You may download any of these forms at http://www.csufresno.edu/chhs/depts_programs/comm_disorders_deaf_stud/policies_forms/grad_requirements.shtml All files with a PDF extension need the Acrobat Reader to open them. If it is not installed on your computer, you can get the program free of charge from: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

requirements. It enables the student to pursue a graduate degree and fulfill all of the professional, personal, scholastic, and other standards (including qualifying examinations) prescribed by the campus.

In consultation with your academic advisor and the graduate program coordinator, you should petition for advancement of candidacy at the beginning of your second semester of graduate studies.

If you are planning to do a *thesis* or a *project* as a culminating experience, it is essential that you be advanced to candidacy at the beginning of the second semester of graduate studies.

Information for students admitted into the program on a conditional status: Students may be admitted to a graduate degree program in this category if, in the opinion of the appropriate campus authority, the student can remedy deficiencies by additional preparation, including the combination of prerequisite requirements.

Students who have been granted conditionally classified admission to a graduate program are required to complete all conditions for achieving classified status (full admission) to the program by the semester in which a maximum of 10 units to be used toward the master's degree is completed. Failure to attain classified graduate standing in a timely manner as outlined in the catalog may result in the loss of units to be applied toward the degree since units in excess of 10 prior to classification may not be listed on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy.

A student is expected to attain *classified* graduate standing either at admission or during the first semester of studies. Candidates for classification are expected to possess a minimum 3.0 post-baccalaureate cumulative grade point average.

It is your responsibility to meet the conditions specified in your letter of admission into the graduate program. As soon as you have met the conditions, please see the graduate program coordinator to initiate the request for classification.

How and when to request classification status? Students who have been granted conditionally classified admission to a graduate program are required to complete all conditions for achieving classified status (full admission) to the program by the semester in which a maximum of 10 units to be used toward the master's degree is completed.

Graduate-Level Writing Competence

California State University, Fresno requires that students have graduate-level writing abilities before being advanced to candidacy for the master's degree. Students can demonstrate these abilities by passing the writing component of the CDDS 200 course and obtaining written clearance from the instructor.

The CDDS graduate writing evaluation process has two components to it.

- A. The in-class spontaneous essay writing on an academic or general issue or topic, and
- B. Completing a research paper according to the APA format. The research paper is an extensive assignment, prepared with in-depth research into the topic and the research design. It is usually a treatment efficacy study.

If students fail either or both of these components, the remedies are as follows:

1. Students who fail the in-class writing test are given two more opportunities to pass: each of these in-class essays will be on a different topic or issue.
2. Students who fail to meet the research paper component of the graduate writing evaluation also will have two additional opportunities to revise and resubmit their proposal. The professor will provide written comments about the students' papers. The students can revise their papers and resubmit them, usually within a previously agreed upon time period but no later than the end of the first month after classes start in the following semester.

Graduate Writing Skills Appeal Process: If a student decides to appeal any graduate matters, including the graduate writing evaluation, the student should submit an appeal in writing to the departmental graduate coordinator. After reviewing the recommendations of the graduate coordinator, the department chair will make the final recommendation on the appeal.

Advancement to Candidacy: Eligibility

Classified graduate standing gives a student permission to work toward qualifying for candidacy. Advancement to candidacy gives a student permission to proceed toward qualifying for the degree and provides the student with a program of study that has been

officially reviewed and approved by both the student's faculty and by the graduate dean. This important step confers on the student the status of candidate for the degree and represents a commitment both on the part of the student and the degree program to complete the degree within a specified time limit according to requirements published in a specific university catalog year. Advancement to candidacy is essential to the student in planning for registration in courses. The student should therefore meet with his/her graduate program coordinator soon after attaining classified graduate standing to discuss advancement to candidacy.

Advancement to candidacy must be attained no later than *the semester (or summer) preceding the semester (or summer) in which the student begins the culminating experience*. Campus policy requires a student to petition for advancement to candidacy as soon as he/she becomes eligible to do so. Normally, this should occur within one semester of having attained classified graduate standing. Compliance with this policy is necessary for a student to remain in good standing. All students in graduate standing must also demonstrate a satisfactory level of scholastic, professional, and ethical competence as determined by program faculty to be eligible to continue in the graduate program. Eligibility requirements for advancement to candidacy include the following:

1. A student should be classified by the semester in which a maximum of 10 units to be used toward the master's degree are completed. Not more than 10 units (including transfer and post-baccalaureate credit) completed before achieving full classified graduate standing at California State University, Fresno may be listed on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy. Courses taken during the semester in which the student is classified may also be listed on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy.
2. Completion of any additional prerequisites which the adviser specifies in writing.
3. A minimum program grade point average of 3.0 in all courses listed on the advancement petition. Those enrolling in coursework not related to the graduate degree are encouraged to request CR/NC grading.
4. Completion in graduate standing at California State University, Fresno of at least 9 units of the proposed program with a 3.0 grade point average on all completed work appearing on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy.

5. All graduate students must demonstrate their competence in written English prior to advancement to candidacy. Early completion of this requirement is recommended. The date the student met the graduate writing requirement must be noted on the Petition of Advancement to Candidacy form. See approved program requirements.
6. Submission to the Division of Graduate Studies of the properly signed Petition of Advancement to Candidacy. Petitions are available on the Division of Graduate Studies website at <http://www.csufresno.edu/gradstudies/forms/atc.shtml>. In recommending a student for advancement, the department takes into account professional and personal standards as well as scholastic achievement as revealed by grades and performance on examinations. The student is responsible for ensuring that the adviser has sufficient information other than grades and scores on which to make this recommendation. On this petition, the student, in consultation with his or her adviser, lists the coherent set of courses which, when approved, will constitute his or her degree program. The student is responsible for adhering to deadlines established by the Graduate Division for the submission of advancement forms. Forms received after the deadlines are considered late and will be processed as time allows. *Students cannot be advanced to candidacy and graduate in the same semester.*

Advancement to Candidacy: Policies

The approved degree program for the master's degree is a coherent pattern of (1) specific requirements for the program and (2) additional courses selected to meet the student's particular needs. It consists of at least 36 units which must be completed within 5 years just preceding the granting of the master's degree. Only graduate courses (200 series) and such upper-division courses (100 series) as are recommended by the colleges, schools, or departments and approved by the University Graduate Committee are acceptable on the unit requirement. Other courses are counted in calculating the student's study load and cumulative post-baccalaureate GPA, but cannot be counted toward the unit requirement for the master's degree. Courses that were used to satisfy the requirements of a previous degree may not be used on the program. The approved program must be consistent with the following policies:

At least 26 units of a 36-unit program must be residence credit (courses taken through regular enrollment at California State University, Fresno). No more than 10 units of transfer and/or California State University, Fresno Extension credit may be included in the 36-unit program.

Transfer credit may be used toward a California State University, Fresno master's degree only if the institution offering the work is accredited (A-rated) and would accept it for a comparable master's degree program. The off-campus institution must also have listed the units as post-baccalaureate graduate units on the student's transcript. Credit at California State University, Fresno will be granted if it is judged by appropriate university authorities to be particularly relevant to the individual student's program. The student must present appropriate documentation, including official transcripts of work completed and copies from the catalog of the institution where the transfer work was taken, as follows: the relevant course description(s), evidence that the course(s) may be used toward a graduate degree at that institution, the course numbering and grading systems, and information clarifying whether the institution used the semester or quarter system.

Courses taken through Continuing and Global Education (Extension and/or Open University) are not normally used to fulfill the requirements toward a master's degree. Students intending to take a course through the Division Continuing and Global Education must request special permission from their graduate program coordinator to use the course toward their program. If approved, a maximum of 10 transfer (including California State University, Fresno Extension and/or Open University) units may be used on a 36-unit program. Students may not enroll through Open University in order to bypass the university fee structure.

Courses used to fulfill G.E. curriculum (Capstone, Integration, or Multicultural/International), undergraduate writing W courses, lower-division courses, and professional (300-level) courses may not be used in fulfillment of the program requirements of the master's degree.

Student teaching credit is not ordinarily used on master's degree programs. In unusual circumstances, if student teaching is demonstrably appropriate to a program, up to 3 units of such work may be approved by the University Graduate Committee.

Credit by Examination (CBE) may be used to fulfill prerequisites, but may not apply toward the master's degree program.

Graduate students may not elect to take a course for a CR grade to fulfill either prerequisite or major program requirements unless the course is only available for CR/NC grading as indicated by classnote 14 in the Class Schedule. No CR/NC-graded courses to be counted toward fulfillment of the degree requirements.

Post-baccalaureate/graduate credit taken prior to the granting of the baccalaureate degree. With approval of the graduate program coordinator, post-baccalaureate/graduate credit allowed for work taken prior to the granting of the baccalaureate degree may be applied toward a master's degree. However, the amount of post-baccalaureate credit used toward the master's degree may not exceed one-third of the student's entire approved program.

Courses may not be included on the advancement to candidacy petition if they do not fall within the 5-year limit. A minimum of 70% of the courses in a student's program for the master's degree must be graduate-level courses numbered in the 200 series. Substitutions for regular departmental requirements must be approved by the graduate program coordinator and noted on the front page of the Petition for Advancement to Candidacy.

How and when to petition for the advancement of candidacy?

Toward the end of each semester, the graduate program coordinator holds a meeting for those students planning to petition for advancement to candidacy. You should attend this meeting if you are planning to petition during the following semester.

Culminating Experience

A culminating experience is required for each master's degree. Acceptable culminating experiences include comprehensive examination, thesis (299), or project (298). Selection of the culminating experience preferably should be decided by the end of the first semester of graduate studies. Students who have enrolled in thesis or project units will not be permitted to change to another culminating experience during the semester in which they apply for the MA degree to be granted. Please note that if you change your culminating experience after you have enrolled in thesis (CDDS 299) or project (CDDS 298), the units are given a grade of *F* upon graduation.

Comprehensive Examination

A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination must evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation.

Thesis

A thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It clearly identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the

data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis will be required.

If you have decided to pursue thesis as a culminating experience, please download the thesis guidelines and template from the Division of Graduate Studies website. Also, you must attend the thesis workshop held by the Division of Graduate Studies (these are offered each semester). Please take a look at what makes a good thesis proposal. The department also has a cabinet full of theses conducted by previous students. You have full access to these documents.

Graduate Project

A project is a significant undertaking of a pursuit appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It must evidence originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It must be described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

Thesis or Project Research Involving Human Subjects and Animal Subjects.

Students conducting thesis research involving human subjects should not begin use of human subjects until written approval has been received from the departmental Human Subjects Committee and, where review demands, the University Committee on Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). Guidelines and forms for protocol can be obtained from the department office or the Office of the Vice President for Administration. Students should allow at least 2 weeks for a required CPHS review.

Comprehensive examinations

Statement of Philosophy: Comprehensive examinations are a means by which the faculty assesses your performance at the conclusion of your graduate program before granting the Master of Arts Degree in Communicative Disorders. This assessment is achieved through a series of questions and activities (such as sign language proficiency for Deaf Education students). The written exams provide your faculty the first opportunity to determine if you have achieved adequate mastery of the field. When a written answer in a specific area of study appears insufficient, the faculty will examine that area in more depth during oral examinations in an attempt to determine if you need more review and study in that area. Oral questioning may range beyond the content of the written question in an attempt to

determine your level of expertise in that area, and you will want to keep in mind that your faculty is evaluating you globally in each area, rather than focusing only on the original written question and its answer.

Comprehensive Written Examinations - Speech Language Pathology areas of examination: The candidate for the Master of Arts in Communicative Disorders with a Speech-Language Pathology emphasis will be examined within four general areas.

Area I: Basic Communication Processes

- A. Basic understanding of the anatomy, neurology, and physiology of the speech, language, and hearing mechanisms
- B. Understanding of the normal process of speech and language acquisition
- C. Basic understanding of verbal learning, verbal expression, and verbal behavior

Area II: Disorders of Speech and Language

An understanding of the various disorders common to speech and language pathology; their classification, manifestation, and causes

Area III: Diagnostic Procedures in Speech-Language Pathology

- A. Techniques and instruments used in the assessment of speech and language disorders in children and adults
- B. Psychometric principles (e.g., validity, reliability, standardization, statistical principles, etc.)
- C. Understanding of procedures utilized to determine the causes(s) of specific speech and language disorders

Area IV: Intervention and Remediation of Speech and Language Disorders

- A. Understanding the common principles and procedures used in habilitation and rehabilitation of persons with various disorders of communication
- 2. An understanding of the rationale given in support of specific remedial methods that may be employed in speech and language remediation

Preparing for Comprehensive Exams: You are required to complete the clearance to take comprehensive exams form and submit it in the graduate coordinator at least a week prior to your written exam date. The department offers comprehensive exams twice a year, in January (for Deaf Education), and in March or April, and October (for Speech-Language Pathology). To facilitate your preparation for the exams, "comprehensive exam socials" may be led by various faculty members. Start attending these as frequently as possible.

Students are encouraged to start preparing for the exams at least 3 months before the exams.

To ensure your success on comprehensive examinations, it is recommended that you:

1. Establish a disciplined, structured weekly study schedule for at least 3 months preceding comprehensive exams.
2. Organize regular study groups with other students who will be taking the comprehensive examinations with you. Be sure each member of the group has an assignment for each study group session.
3. Review all of your undergraduate and graduate class notes and assignments.
4. Establish a reading schedule to review textbooks and articles in relevant professional journals over the last 5 years
5. Review course bibliographies from your graduate courses.
6. Review all undergraduate and graduate textbooks and recommended readings

All written examinations are completed on computer. Computers and computer lab access are arranged by the department. You may not use your own computer. No use of the internet is permitted during the written examinations. Unless you were asked to write in an outline form, use the essay style. You don't have to include a reference section, but it is a good idea to support your answer with references to literature or case studies. Use APA writing style. Cite appropriate sources to substantiate your responses.

Make sure you carefully read and understand the question(s) being posed. If you are unsure about a question, you may:

1. Ask a proctor who may be able to help clarify the question. Please note that the proctor can only help clarify a question, not help guide you with information about the answer.

2. Define how you are interpreting the question, and then respond to it. This can be particularly helpful for the type of questions that can be answered in several directions.
3. Make sure you address all the areas of the question. For example, a question may have several sub-parts that you will need to address.
4. As you answer a question, periodically re-read the question to ensure that you are remaining on track.
5. When you finish answering a question, re-read the question and your whole answer to make sure that you have answered the question in its entirety.

Examination Procedures

The comprehensive written examination will be written in 2 days, with one half of the examination administered each day.

Written Comprehensive Examinations

You will be completing the written portion of your comprehensive exam as follows: you will write Areas I and II (SLP students) or Areas I, II, and III (DE students) on the first day and Areas III and IV (SLP students) or Areas IV, V, and VI (DE students) on the next day. You will have a total of 8 hours for the written questions; 4 hours are provided each day. It is frequently helpful for students to spend a few minutes per question to organize an outline of the major points that will be covered in the response. An outline directs your thoughts, helps organize your answer, and makes it easier to monitor your time allocated for that answer. An outline also helps you to not omit important information. The outline may be submitted with the answer if it is included in the typed document. Written notes may not be submitted unless a question requires a drawing.

As soon as you receive your packet, read through the questions. If you need clarification on the content of any of the question, be sure to ask the person who is proctoring the test, not another student.

Your answers will be evaluated according to the quality of writing, including organization and clearness of expression, accuracy of information, and completeness.

Grading of the Comprehensive Examinations.

Each written answer is graded as “passed,” “marginally passed,” or “failed.” See the definitions below.

“*Passed*”: Demonstrated adequate mastery of the area.

“*Marginally Passed*”: Demonstrated near-adequate mastery of the area. Student will be orally examined in this area. The result of the oral examination will be a determination that the students has either “passed” or “failed” that area.

“*Failed*”: Demonstrated insufficient mastery of the area. Student will retake the written examination in at least this area (see *Comprehensive Examination Retake Policy* below); students who pass with less than 50% of the areas on which they were examined during their current attempt will be required to retake *all areas* of the written examination.

Oral Comprehensive Examinations

Students take an oral examination for areas of their current attempt of the written examination that are graded “marginal pass.” The oral examinations will typically occur 2-3 weeks after the written examinations. You will have access to your written answers during this period, but will not be allowed to take any notes at all. Please call the office staff to find out the time when you could review your answers. Oral exams may be broader in scope than the written question. There will be two to three faculty members present at each oral exam.

An oral exam usually begins with an opportunity given for the student to clarify, expand, or correct the answer from the written exam. Faculty will then pursue certain areas in greater depth as deemed necessary. The decision regarding passing the oral segment of the comprehensive examinations will be made by those in attendance at the oral exam, immediately after it is completed. These results will be shared with the student at that time. Passing the oral will mean having passed comprehensive examinations. Deaf Education students are required to sign throughout the oral examination period.

Comprehensive Examination Retake Policy.

Upon completion of an attempt (i.e., written and any oral examinations), a student will have a grade of “passed” or “failed” in each area examined. Students who fail one or more areas of their comprehensive examination during a single examination attempt will be required to retake the written comprehensive examination. Whether a student retakes,

during their *next* examination attempt, the entire examination or just the areas failed in their *current* attempt is determined by the percent of areas passed during their current examination attempt.

If during the *current attempt* a student passes 50% or more of the areas on which they were examined, the student will retake on their next attempt only the areas failed during the current attempt. If, during the *current attempt*, a student passes *less than 50%* of the areas on which they were examined, the student will retake on their next attempt only the areas failed during the current attempt. **Note that this means that a student may be required to retake areas they had passed during a *previous attempt*.**

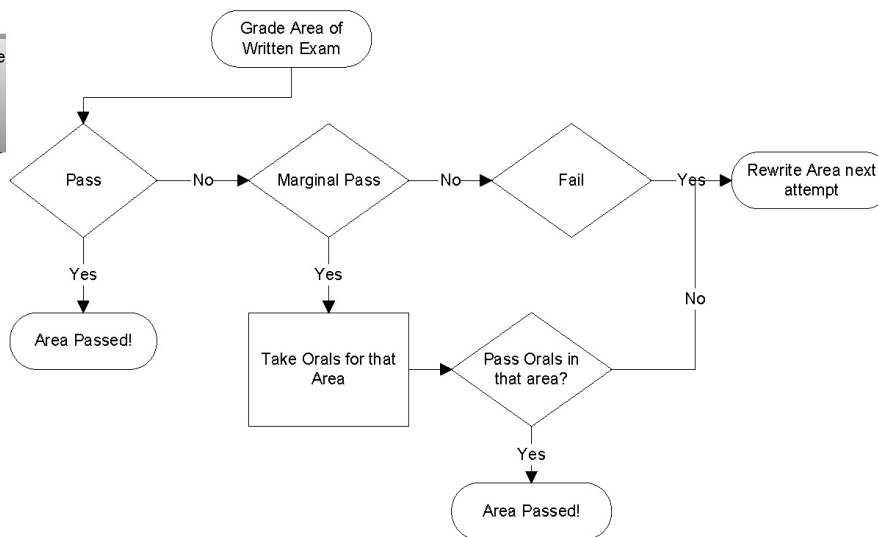
Graduation Information

For complete, detailed information on graduate policies and procedures, refer to the “Graduate Studies” section of the university General Catalog. Graduation information is available at <http://www.csufresno.edu/gradstudies/forms/index.shtml>. Deadlines are available at <http://www.csufresno.edu/gradstudies/deadlines.shtml>.

Grading Comprehensive Examinations

Grading of Each Area of Written Examination

This flowchart shows the results of the three levels of grading for the written examination. Only "marginal pass" results in orals; fail results in rewriting the area.



Possible Outcomes of Each Attempt

The outcomes of each semester's comprehensive Examination can result in either passing the entire Examination, rewriting only the areas failed during the current attempt, or rewriting all areas (whether they were previously passed or not passed).

