



REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
Syracuse University College of Arts and Sciences

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Admission Requirements:

To be admitted to the PhD program in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology, a CSD faculty member must agree to initially mentor a student. Therefore, prospective students must discuss their research interests with a faculty member of their own choosing to determine if these interests can be met within the department. The PhD is a research degree, and very little or no clinical training is offered. If a candidate is interested in obtaining such training, he or she should apply to the Master's in SLP or AuD programs in the department.

Candidates for admission to the PhD degree should possess a bachelor's degree with a GPA of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale in the last 60 semester credits of their undergraduate degree. If a candidate has a graduate degree, Master's degree or AuD, a minimum GPA of 3.5 in their graduate work is required. In addition, the candidate should obtain a minimum percentile score of 40% in the Verbal section, 50% in the Quantitative section, and a 4.0 in the Writing section on the Graduate Record Examination taken within the last 5 years. Acceptable TOEFL scores (105 Internet based) must also be submitted by applicants who are not native speakers of English.

All applicants to the PhD (including current AuD students applying to the dual degree – see below) must submit applications through the Syracuse University online graduate application system. Three strong letters of recommendations, a CV/resume, and a detailed personal statement responding to all required prompts will be required when submitting application materials. The student should also submit at least one example of research writing, which may include a research paper, literature review, significant writing assignment from a course, article critique, or other demonstration of research-related writing. The purpose of the writing sample is to provide the advisor with an indication of the student's written communication skills and level of experience with research-related writing prior to agreeing to serve as their research mentor. If the candidate does not already have an existing appropriate writing sample, the prospective mentor may ask for a specific type of writing as part of their review.

The review committee consists of all tenured/tenure-track (TT) faculty in the department, who will have an opportunity to review the candidate's materials and provide feedback on appropriateness for admission. An interview with at least one faculty member will also be required prior to admission. The primary decision will be up to the prospective mentor and the chair of the department, in consultation with the graduation admissions chair, and will depend on the pool of applicants and the availability of funding. Students admitted to the PhD program are guaranteed four years of funding, typically through a combination of assistantships and fellowships.

AuD/PhD dual degree applicants:

All candidates for the dual AuD/PhD degree must first be admitted to and successfully complete the first year of the AuD program. To apply to the dual program, the candidate must take the GRE if scores (within the last 5 years) were not already submitted when admitted for admission to the AuD program. GPA and GRE requirements are the same as described above. Each student in the AuD/PhD program must have a faculty research sponsor, and this sponsorship must be agreed upon prior to admission to the dual program. Dual AuD/PhD applicants will have application fees

waived for the Syracuse University graduate application. In addition, only one letter of recommendation is required, which should be from the proposed mentor. Transcripts do not need to be submitted if copies of all previous transcripts have already been received at the time of admission to the AuD program. All other requirements and procedures described above will be followed.

The deadline for application to all PhD programs (including dual AuD/PhD) is January 1 each year, to be consistent with funding decision timelines. If approved by the faculty, AuD/PhD applications may be considered at other times depending on availability of funding.

Residency Requirement

All candidates for the PhD program must be a full-time student in the program for a minimum of two semesters. As stated in the Academic Rules for Doctoral Degrees, “At least 50% of a doctoral student’s planned coursework (exclusive of dissertation) must be in courses offering “residence credit” at Syracuse University.” Experience credit, clinical practicum, and professional experience courses may not be included. Current rules should be reviewed in the online Academic Rules for Graduate Degree Programs/Doctoral Degrees, found in the online Syracuse University Course Catalog for the current year.

Continuous Registration Requirement

Candidates must register for a minimum of 3 semester hours for each academic semester until coursework is completed. Degree in progress (GRD 998) enrollment may be used, after successful completion of the coursework for the doctoral degree, as specified below. GRD 998 enrollment may include semesters in which the student is preparing for the Qualifying Exam and semesters preparing for or conducting the dissertation.

Deadline for Course Completion

See the Advancement to Candidacy/Time to Degree section of the Academic [Rules for current timelines and requirements in the course catalog](#). The maximum time for completion of a doctoral degree, as set and monitored by the Graduate School, is eight years from the term the student matriculated into the doctoral program. The eight-year time to degree requirement expectation represents the maximum number of years a graduate student can take to complete the degree. Doctoral programs can and should enforce shorter time to degree requirements as necessary and outlined in their respective departmental handbooks.

The eight-year time to completion expectation does not automatically stop and start again in situations where a student takes a leave of absence, nor does it extend solely based on part-time status. Credited time towards degree completion based on a leave of absence or part-time status will be granted only with approval of the program and the Graduate School Dean through a petition filed with the Graduate School.

Coursework

Coursework for the PhD is individually designed, and courses will be determined by the student and faculty advisor. Candidates are expected to complete a minimum of 83 academic credits beyond the bachelor's degree including coursework, independent studies, and dissertation credits. Because most of the research in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology requires considerable expertise in statistics, candidates must pass at least three 3 courses in statistical methods and 1 in experimental design. Some coursework may be taken in other units of the university after consultation with the advisor. There must be a minimum of 2 dissertation credits (CSD 999).

The dual AuD/PhD program requires 110 credits, including the 92 credits of the AuD program. There must be a minimum of 18 unique credits for the PhD program of study.

Coursework is subject to university requirements for transfer and department's residency requirements as stated above.

Pre-Qualifying Exam

At the completion of at least 18 credits in the CSD doctoral program, the student must pass a Pre-Qualifying Exam. The exam is designed to examine the candidate's abilities to perform critical thinking, to express ideas in writing, and to conduct analysis of research. The purpose of this examination is two-fold; first, it will assist in the identification of persons for whom the PhD experience in this department is not appropriate and second, it will help identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the candidate's background. The consequences of failing this exam may be (1) retaking sections as deemed necessary by the faculty, (2) additional coursework/directed readings and retaking the exam or (3) dismissal from the program.

The format of the exam will consist of an analysis and critique of 4 provided research articles. See below for the format of the critique for each article. The plan for the exam will be developed by the student in consultation with the advisor. Once the student and the advisor have agreed upon a plan, the student will meet with each of examining members of the committee to determine topic areas for their selected article. The faculty selecting these articles must be comprised of at least 3 members of the full-time PhD CSD faculty. It is possible that one examiner may provide two articles in different areas, but no more than 2 articles may be selected by any one faculty member. The student's advisor may serve as one of the examiners but may only provide 1 article. The faculty will select the articles from among general areas within of speech, language, or hearing sciences and pathologies. If the candidate's major area is Audiology, one of the articles will be drawn from speech/language areas. If the candidate's major is Speech-Language Pathology, one of the articles must be drawn from hearing areas. The student will obtain signatures and agreed upon topic areas from the committee members on the Pre-Qualifying Examination form and will return the form to the advisor.

All faculty participating in the exam will give the candidate's advisor the articles for approval at least 1 week before they are given to the candidate. The chosen articles must be stand-alone articles and should not require the student to read/review any other papers to critique the selected paper (although the student may choose to read/reference other papers as stated below) and will be subject to approval by the student's advisor. All

four articles will be provided to the candidate together. The candidate will have up to two weeks from the date of the receipt of the articles to submit the written analyses.

Article Critique Requirements:

The critique should be formatted as follows and include:

1. A summary of the article and an analysis/critique of strengths and weakness of aspects of the design, methodology, and analyses of the study. The analysis of each article can be no more than 5 double-spaced pages, with the summary section expected to be 1 page (total of 6 pages maximum, not including the cover page).
2. Explicit identification of the research question(s) and hypotheses, the specific research design(s) utilized, and the main variables (IV and DV) and statistical analysis applied to these variables.
3. Discussion of the justification of the study, appropriateness of the data presentation, and stated conclusions based on the presented data.
4. Directions for future research including possible revisions of the study design/methods/etc. that would better address the research question or ideas for studies addressing related research questions.
5. Paper format and writing should follow proper APA format for grammar and style and include the following:
 - a. Cover page (not included in the page count), including the following student's name, examiner name, date of submission, and complete article citation.
 - b. Pages must be numbered.
 - c. The entire critique should be strictly double-spaced, with no additional space before or after each line (check your paragraph settings, 12 pt. font, with 1" margins on all sides.

In writing the critiques, students may consult other printed resources if they wish. If they do so, these should be appropriately cited. However, it is not necessary to do so; this is ***not*** intended to be a research paper. However, students may not consult any other person regarding the articles or the critiques; no other person may edit the critiques. If any questions arise during the process, they should be directed to the advisor.

Faculty will provide brief written feedback to the advisor within one week after receiving the student's critique. The advisor will determine the overall results of the exam based on the individual faculty feedback and recommendations for pass/fail and any remediation. The advisor will record results and decisions on the Pre-Qualifying Exam Form and submit to Degree Certification for recording of milestone completion. The Pre-Qualifying exam, grading and transmittal of results to the student should generally be completed by end of summer of year 1 of the PhD, or after the first year being admitted to the dual AuD/PhD program.

Guided Research Experience

Under the guidance of the faculty advisor, the student will be expected to design, implement, analyze the results, and write a journal article for a mentored research project. The written product must be submitted for publication prior to taking the Qualifying examination. It is not required that the paper be accepted for publication, but it must be submitted to a journal with a peer review process. If the paper has not been submitted by the time the student is scheduled to begin the qualifying exam, the exam should be delayed unless approved by petition to the qualifying exam committee to complete the exam and submit the paper shortly following (petitions should include the estimated submission date).

Under exceptional circumstances a previously completed substantial research project (such as a previously completed master's thesis or similar work) may be considered to replace this requirement by petition to the faculty.

Qualifying Exam

At the completion of planned coursework, the candidate must pass a qualifying examination designed to assess his or her knowledge about the areas of Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology and the basic methods for research. Although this exam focuses on the preparation of research proposals, it is not necessarily a precursor to a candidate's dissertation prospectus. The candidate is expected to write the exam without consultation with his or her advisor on the design or writing of the specific proposed research. This exam requires the development of a theoretical rationale, study aims/objectives and hypotheses, and specific methods to achieve each objective, in accordance with the formatting specifications discussed below. The candidate's Qualifying Exam committee will consist of 4 members, 2 or more of which must be faculty members of the department. There will be a meeting of the candidate's committee prior to the exam to discuss and agree on the topic areas to be examined.

Initial topic proposal for committee approval:

The student will submit a proposal of 1-2 pages (not including reference list) on the possible topic at least three days prior to this initial meeting. The proposal should include the following elements:

1. Statement of purpose/research question
2. Background and justification
3. Research aims and objectives
4. Overview of intended methods and approach
5. Possible outcomes
6. References

The candidate will have an opportunity to discuss their ideas for a proposal and obtain feedback from committee members. At the end of the meeting, the committee will sign a form indicating approval of the candidate's topic and general approach for the exam.

Research proposal requirements:

The candidate will then write the qualifying exam research proposal in the format of the specific aims and research strategies sections of required for NIH Predoctoral Fellowship applications (F31). The document containing the Specific Aims (1 page) and Research Strategy (6 pages) is to be submitted to the committee no later than 6 weeks after approval is given .. Application guidelines and requirements can be found on the NIH grants information website (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide.html>) , with the guidelines for the general SF424 (R&R) application. Only those 7 pages are required, no other attachments or components such as applicant background, research training plan, budget, etc. are required, only the specific aims and research strategy sections. Students may not consult any other person regarding the grant proposal, and the document cannot be shared with any outside readers. The document cannot be edited by anyone other than the student. If any questions arise during the process, they should be directed to the advisor.

Criteria for evaluation of qualifying exam:

Criteria for evaluation of the candidate's written presentation will follow criteria established by NIH for grant reviews. The appropriate criteria for this examination are:

Significance: Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the proposal are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

Innovation: Is the project original and innovative? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice; address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?

Approach: Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?

The oral phase of the examination will take place one week after the submission of the written proposals and may include questions on any phase of the material discussed in the written part. The committee may require the candidate to specify or explain concepts from the written document during the oral exam. Three affirmative votes from the members of the committee are required for the candidate to pass this examination. The committee may recommend that the candidate pass the exam but be required to take additional coursework or independent study to address any concerns raised by the committee. Reasons for a candidate's failure will be clearly defined and expectations will be documented and agreed upon by all members of the committee. Should the candidate not pass this examination, it may be retaken only after the candidate completes a term of additional study (see Academic Rules). There will be no further retakes in the event of failure on the second examination.

- Qualifying Exam completion form needs to be signed and sent to degree certification.
- ABD form needs to be completed if also done with required coursework at this time and sent to degree certification.

Dissertation Committee:

At a minimum, the dissertation committee consists of a minimum of four faculty members, including the student's dissertation advisor, who will form the committee for the proposal and the dissertation defense. In addition, the (minimum) fifth member at the dissertation oral exam will be the Oral Exam Chair, who must be a tenured or tenure track faculty member at Syracuse University from outside of the student's program of enrollment. At least three of the minimum four members of the initial proposal committee must be departmental faculty (including the mentor). The fourth member may be internal or external to the department. All SU committee members must be tenured, tenure-track or PhD non-tenure track faculty. NTT faculty cannot chair or be the advisor on a dissertation committee. The student must petition to include more than one external committee member. See the SU Academic Rules for additional committee membership information.

In summary, the dissertation committee will be composed of, at a minimum:

- Dissertation advisor
- Two other committee members from the department
- An additional member who may be internal or external to the department
- Oral exam chair, who comes in for the final dissertation oral examination.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting:

After passing the Qualifying exam, the student under the guidance of the faculty advisor shall design, implement, and analyze a major original empirical research project in his or her chosen area. The student will prepare a formal document for review and approval by the dissertation committee that will consist of an introduction, review of the literature, statement of rationale and purpose for the study and a detailed discussion of the experimental design and procedures that will be followed to acquire the data. Typically, the conventional format is followed in which these components form thorough and completed first chapters of the dissertation (see the dissertation format below, all chapters excluding the results, discussion, and conclusions), as will be submitted with the final dissertation document upon completion of the project (with appropriate revision). If a student chooses to do a multiple-paper format instead of the conventional dissertation format, this must be stated and at the dissertation proposal meeting and reflected in the written proposal document. The proposal should include a series of related experiments that are cohesively described.

The written proposal document must be provided to the committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled proposal meeting. Members of the committee should provide to the advisor any substantive feedback that should be addressed by the student in their proposal presentation or indicates significant areas of concern at least 3 days prior to the proposal meeting. The student will present a 30-minute overview with PowerPoint slides of the proposed research. After the presentation, committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the oral presentation or the written proposal. The committee will conduct a majority vote resulting in one of the following outcomes:

- 1) Proposal approved with minimal changes,
- 2) Proposal conditionally approved pending committee review of changes, or
- 3) Proposal not approved.

If there are conditions that require further development, the student will continue to work with the committee to fulfill any requirements before proceeding with the research. The committee may request a second proposal meeting and/or review of a revised written document. On completion of the proposal defense, the members of a student's dissertation defense committee sign the Results of Dissertation Proposal Meeting form.

Dissertation requirements:

After successful completion of the Proposal Meeting the student will implement the dissertation project under the guidance of the faculty advisor. The PhD candidate is responsible for making adequate progress toward completing the dissertation. The advisor or chair of the doctoral program may require regular reports from the student to ensure adequate progress is made toward completion of the dissertation. Timelines and all dissertation formats and procedures will be negotiated between the student and the faculty advisor. The candidate can choose to use either a conventional or multiple paper format for their dissertation document. The conventional format includes the following elements: introduction with an extensive review of the literature, methods, results, discussion, and conclusions. The multiple-paper format will include a general introduction with an extensive review of the literature for the general topic, a series of 2 to 3 individual manuscripts intended for publication, and overall conclusions. Students should select their dissertation format based on their project and in consultation with their faculty advisor.

Doctoral Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense):

Upon completion of the data collection, analysis and written dissertation document, the student will schedule a meeting for the Doctoral Oral Examination. The faculty advisor must approve the compiled dissertation manuscript before the Oral Examination meeting can be scheduled.

Doctoral Examining Committee and Scheduling of Exam:

The Doctoral Examining Committee must consist of a minimum of 5 members, as described above including the Oral Examination Chair. The student, faculty advisor and home department will complete a Request for Examination form, which will specify the name of the oral chair. The form must be submitted to the graduate certification Office for approval to schedule the examination at least three weeks prior to the proposed defense date. In addition, the Graduate School will confirm that all degree requirements have been met before the defense can be scheduled, including completion of all coursework and degree milestones (see milestones at the end of this document).

Oral Examination/Defense Procedures:

The following University guidelines are provided regarding the Doctoral Oral Examination: “The oral examination, based on the dissertation, is intended to judge the quality of the dissertation, explore the dissertation’s substantive and methodological quality, demonstrate the ability of the candidate to defend the dissertation and show

competence in the chosen field and related areas. In different disciplines, one or another aspect may be emphasized.” Dissertation oral examinations, but not the committee voting, are open to all members of the University community. Time and place of the examination should be publicly announced. See University guidelines for formal procedures on voting and approval of the dissertation.

The dissertation defense, like the dissertation proposal defense, is typically characterized by four components:

- 1) a brief prefatory meeting of committee members,
- 2) an approximately 30-minute presentation by the degree candidate that is followed by discussion,
- 3) voting by committee members, and
- 4) reporting the decision on acceptability by the Oral Examination Chair to the degree candidate.

Voting is conducted in a closed meeting of the Dissertation Committee. Decisions about acceptability are based on majority vote of the committee. The chair of the Oral Examination reports the results of the vote and submits the approval page with signatures to the graduate school.

Submission of dissertation to the Graduate School:

Students should consult the website for the Graduate School <https://graduateschool.syr.edu/current-students/graduation/> for deadlines and requirements including reviewing Degree Works and submitting the degree audit worksheet, program of study form, thesis/dissertation defense checklist, request for examination form, diploma request, and instructions for the electronic submittal of the dissertation. Further information regarding dissertation format and submission are here: <https://graduateschool.syr.edu/preparing-your-thesis-dissertation/>

Be aware of graduation **deadlines which are strictly enforced**, including the last day to submit a request for exam, file diploma request, and final document submission: <https://graduateschool.syr.edu/current-students/graduation/graduation-deadlines/>. Note that the timing of these deadlines is different in the spring compared to summer or fall graduation deadlines.

Checklist of milestones and forms to be submitted:

Degree works milestone forms:

Advisor or operations specialist submits to degree certification degrecert@syr.edu

- Signed pre-qualifying exam results form
- Signed qualifying exam results form
- Signed ABD status form (after required course credits completed)
- Dissertation document submission (complete when dissertation document accepted by grad school)

Department requirements:

- Dissertation proposal results form (save in advising file)

Graduation checklist:

- Degree audit worksheet (work on with Operations Specialist, petitions for electives, etc.)
- File diploma request through MySlice
- [Request for examination](#) for oral dissertation defense at least 3 weeks prior to proposed defense date (submitted to degrecert@syr.edu, must be signed by advisor and department chair)
- Dissertation document to the committee at least two full weeks prior to defense
- Oral examination results (submitted by oral defense chair)
- Dissertation final document (submitted by student)
 - see Thesis/Dissertation checklist Answers page
<https://answers.syr.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=94049081&redirect>