FAQs about the University of Iowa
Speech-Language Pathology Master of Arts program

General application information:
Applications to UI's Master of Arts Speech-Language Pathology (MA-SLP) program are administered through the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application Service for Clinical Education in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (CSDCAS). CSDCAS was created to provide a convenient and efficient process for prospective students to research, compare, and apply to multiple schools using a single web-based portal. The system provides an online tool for applicants to check the status of their applications, transcripts, and letters of reference at any time.

Can you tell me what separates your MA-SLP program from others?
The “Iowa Way” focuses on evidence-based practice. We offer students a breadth of coursework and clinical experience taught by experts in the field. Students have opportunities to participate in a variety of clinical experiences in different local facilities, as well as opportunities to participate in the active and exciting research programs of our faculty.

What is the academic community like in this program?
The faculty is highly collaborative and supportive. Many of the faculty interact with other departments and facilities in their research or clinical initiatives, including Psychology & Brain Sciences, Neurology, Otolaryngology, Psychiatry, Nursing, the VA Hospital, and the Center for Disabilities and Development. Faculty members meet every week as a group to discuss issues and to plan for future events, which provides ample opportunities for the teaching and clinical faculty, and the speech-language and audiology faculty, to exchange ideas. The faculty also keep an open-door policy, welcoming students to come discuss any issues. There is an active NSSLHA group that has representation at faculty meetings, so that we can keep each other informed of events and issues.

Are you a research or teaching university?
We are classified as an R1 (Very High Research Activity) institution. Our SLP program is ranked #6 in the country, in part, because of our strong evidence-based practice focus. You need both research and clinical strengths to make that happen.

How many credits are required to graduate with a Masters in Speech Language Pathology?
A minimum of 38 semester hours are needed, but it may vary according to your background. Most graduates have taken between 48 and 56 semester hours in order to graduate.
**How long is the speech language pathology master’s program?**
The *standard* program takes 2 years (5 semesters) including the summer between years 1 and 2. If you do not have the required undergrad prerequisites, your program will take longer, usually 3 years.

**What prerequisites do I need?**
Please see the link here: [https://clas.uiowa.edu/comsci/graduate-program/ma-slp-program-master-arts-speech-language-pathology#admission](https://clas.uiowa.edu/comsci/graduate-program/ma-slp-program-master-arts-speech-language-pathology#admission). You should have most of the prerequisites completed before starting the standard (2-year) MA program. If you have 1 or 2 courses left to complete, these can usually be completed during the MA program; if you are missing more than that, the MA program is likely to take longer than 2 years. For questions about prerequisites, contact Dr. Jean Gordon (Admissions Committee Chair) at jean-k-gordon@uiowa.edu.

**Am I required to have an undergrad degree in speech & hearing science?**
No. We regularly accept students who come from different backgrounds into our graduate programs. However, if you don’t have an undergrad degree in speech and hearing science, you may want to consider taking a few undergrad preparation classes to shorten the length of your graduate program here. Use the link above to see the prerequisites that are required for our grad program. You have three options:

- Take the prerequisite courses after you are accepted into the MA-SLP program. However, your program will take longer, and you will also be charged at the graduate program rate for your courses.

- Enroll as an A9 student (non-degree-seeking status) at the University of Iowa. Doing so gives you the benefit of getting to know our faculty and asking them to write letters of recommendation for you to get into our graduate program. To register as an A9 student, contact Admissions at 319-335-3847.

- Complete the prerequisite courses at your university or any accredited institution. A commonly selected option is the online program at Utah State [https://catalog.usu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=12&poid=9361&returnto=3830](https://catalog.usu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=12&poid=9361&returnto=3830).

**If I have completed some of the introductory graduate-level courses, will this shorten my time in graduate school?**
ASHA requirements for a required number of graduate-level courses, along with the clinical practicum requirements, determine the length of the program. Having some of those courses completed will mean you can take advantage of electives. Many students—whether from Iowa or other institutions—have some of these introductory courses done prior to starting the MA.

**Are MA-SLP classes restricted to graduate students or are undergraduates allowed to sign up for the classes as well?**
It depends on the level of the course. Some courses are designated as applicable for graduate or undergraduate credit. Many of the courses in the MA-SLP program, however, are restricted
Do students get the opportunity to experience all types of SLP careers? Yes. You will have coursework and clinical opportunities to learn about all disorder areas and work settings. Our program follows an expert-based model, which means that you are taught and supervised by faculty in their area of expertise. In your final semester, you will complete two externships, selecting them in collaboration with the Director of Clinical Programs in Speech-Language Pathology, Dr. Anu Subramanian.

Do you have specific tracks, such as medical speech-language pathology? Rather than offering “tracks,” programs are individualized. We offer a broad curriculum that includes coursework and clinic experiences in medical speech-language pathology, but we also require that students become competent in other areas of clinical practice. Our goal is to produce well-rounded clinicians, but we also offer a wide range of electives that allow you to specialize in your areas of interest.

Do you offer the MA-SLP online? No, our program is offered on campus in Iowa City. (Note that, for 2020-2021, some courses will be offered in a hybrid format because of COVID-19.)

Do professors teach and practice or just teach? All of our academic professors teach and engage in research. Our clinical faculty provide mentoring during clinical rotations and teach MA-SLP coursework.

What kind of students thrive in your MA-SLP program? Students with a passion for helping others and a hunger to learn tend to thrive in our program.

How do I apply to the MA program in SLP? To access CSDCAS, please go to http://csdcas.liaisoncas.org/csdcas-students/ to fill out the online application. CSDCAS FAQ’s may be found at https://help.liaisonedu.com/COVID-19/1_Students. CSDCAS Student Customer Service can be reached at 617-612-2030.

When is my application due to CSDCAS? Applications for Fall 2021 are due January 5. Your application must be submitted by January 5, but your recommendation letters and transcripts may arrive after that deadline. Applications are accepted only for the fall session.

My fall grades haven’t been posted yet. Should I send my transcript to CSDCAS anyway? Yes. Your transcript does not need to reach CSDCAS by January 5, but our admissions committee will need it to evaluate your application. Only the submission of your application to CSDCAS is due by January 5. Other materials (recommendation letters and transcripts) may arrive after January 5. CSDCAS will re-open your application in February for a period of time to allow you to update your transcript using information about your fall grades.
**Do I need to apply to the University of Iowa Graduate College as well as CSDCAS?**
Yes, you must apply to both. After you have filled out your profile in CSDCAS, go to the link listed below. Fill out only the name and address information, as well as the institutions you have attended. **Do not send recommendation letters or your essays to the University of Iowa.** You may upload unofficial transcripts initially. Please have all transcripts from all institutions attended sent by February 1 to: Graduate Admissions, 115 Calvin Hall, Iowa City IA 52242-1396. Use this link to apply to University of Iowa: [https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page](https://apply.admissions.uiowa.edu/admissions/login.page) Choose “Speech Pathology & Audiology” as your program.

**How many students are admitted to each year?**
The number of new admissions into the SLP program is limited to approximately 24 per year out of between 130 and 180 applicants. Typically, between a quarter and a third of our incoming class is from Iowa; thus, the majority is from out-of-state.

**How do you select applicants for admission?**
We conduct a holistic evaluation of each candidate. Applicants are rated on their GPA, GRE scores (if required*), essays, letters of recommendation, and other experiences (e.g. clinical and research experiences). We also give special consideration to students who may have been culturally, financially, or educationally disadvantaged.

* **Note:** GRE scores are optional for the fall 2021 applicants, so they will not be factored into the ratings. However, if submitted, they will be considered among the other optional sources of information. If you choose to take the GRE this year, please have your GRE scores sent to The University of Iowa (institution code 6681, dept. code 0620).

**If I am an undergrad at U of Iowa, does that increase my chances of getting into your program?**
Not necessarily - we consider students from all accredited undergraduate programs, and we value an incoming class that is diverse in many ways, including geographical origin. If you are an Iowa undergraduate, however, it may be helpful that you know the department and the faculty, and they know you. You also can be confident that you’ve met all prerequisites required for the graduate program.

**Who should write my letters of recommendation?**
Your letters of recommendation should be from academic and/or clinical sources. Three letters are required; at least two of these should speak to your academic potential. It is not recommended to include letters from someone with whom you have a personal or social relationship (family or friends).
What are the minimum scores I need?
There are no strict minimum criteria, but we keep track of the scores of our entering classes each year to give you an idea of the competition. Following are the statistics for the Fall 2020 semester:

There were 132 applicants competing for 25 open slots.
- 62 were offered admission initially, and 25 of these accepted.
- 6 were waitlisted; no offers were made from the waitlist this year.
- 63 were denied admission.

Of those offered admission:
- the average GPA was 3.85 (ranging from 3.3 to 4.0).
- the average GRE scores were:
  - 157 for verbal (range was 149-168);
  - 153 for quantitative (range was 146-166);
  - 4.4 for analytical writing (range was 3.5 to 5.5).

What should I write in my essay?
The essay consists of two parts. The first section gives you a chance to tell us more about yourself, why you want to be a speech-language pathologist, and what makes you a good candidate for our program. The second part gives us the opportunity to judge your critical thinking skills. The essay questions are listed below for the Fall 2021 application period.

Please complete BOTH parts of the essay described below. The maximum length for both parts together is 1000 words.

Part 1: **Personal Statement.** Describe one or two character trait(s) or experience(s) that make you particularly suited for, or motivated to pursue, a career as a speech-language pathologist. Make sure to illustrate how this trait/experience will facilitate your career using specific examples. (200-400 words)

Part 2: **Critical Thinking Statement.** Examine the data in the following graph. The graph shows mean performance for two communicatively disordered groups before and after treatment. Error bars indicate standard deviations. Develop a clinical or research scenario that might have generated these data, including the population treated and the type of treatment. You can refer to an established treatment approach or make one up that is feasible. Then describe the results and their clinical implications. You have lots of room to be thoughtful and original in your response, as the data could arise in many different scenarios. Your response will be evaluated on the specificity of your ideas, their appropriateness to the field, and your critical thinking in interpreting the data. (600-800 words)
What additional requirements are there for international applicants?
Admission to the University of Iowa requires a score of 550 or higher on the paper-based TOEFL, a score of 213 or higher on the computer based test (CBT), or a score of 81 on the Internet-based test (IBT). Refer to the following website for additional information about international admissions: http://international.uiowa.edu/isss.

How can I apply for an assistantship?
All applicants are considered for an assistantship just by applying to our program. There is no additional form needed. Assistantships are awarded on a merit basis, not as a recruitment tool. Those applicants with the highest ratings by the Admissions Committee are offered available assistantships in the initial phase of admittance. (We also consider your experience, any special skills you might have, and your availability.) If an applicant declines our assistantship offer, we offer to the next in line.

What kind of funding opportunities are there for master students? FAFSA? Scholarships?
We offer assistantships to the top applicants each year. Every fall, we also award several scholarships to outstanding students in the program. In 2020, we awarded $65,000 in scholarships. The Graduate College website has additional information about other opportunities to finance your education: https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding.

Do many of your students work in addition to taking classes and working on research?
Some of our students find employment either in the department, another department on campus, or in the community. We allow our students to accept assistantships in departments other than ours. However, given the intensity of the MA program, we recommend limiting any work requirements to 10 hours a week.

How long before we will hear if we are admitted?
The Admissions Committee allows until February 1 for CSDCAS to process all materials and verify all transcripts. Most often, the applicant will know by mid-March if they have been admitted, denied, or waitlisted.
Who should I contact if I want an in-person visit to the Department?
Contact Mary Jo Yotty, graduate admissions coordinator for the department (mary-yotty@uiowa.edu), to set up a visit to meet with a faculty member and set up a tour with a current grad student. (Note: Currently, because of COVID 19, we are holding a Zoom webinar in place of in-person meetings. If you missed the webinar, please check our website for the recording.)

Who should I contact if I have questions?

- Technical questions about the MA-SLP application process should be Emailed to Mary Jo Yotty (mary-yotty@uiowa.edu).
- Specific advising questions related to your background should be directed to Dr. Eileen Finnegan (eileen-finnegan@uiowa.edu), head of our Speech-Language Pathology program.
- Questions about the admissions process should be sent to Dr. Jean Gordon (jean-k-gordon@uiowa.edu), Chair of the Admissions Committee, and can answer.
- Questions about assistantships available in the department may be emailed to Julie Jones (julie-jones@uiowa.edu), Department Administrator.