

CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY

FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORE YEAR

Establish and maintain a strong GPA

Become involved in college activities (NSSLHA, SCEC, SGA, etc.)

Become a volunteer (Circle K, Children's Physical Development Center)

Develop your writing skills:

- Improve clarity and organization
- Improve editing skills
- Become familiar with APA style

Look at General Education Requirements (GERs) as a means to:

- Increase your cultural literacy
- Increase your vocabulary (helpful for GREs)
- Improve your comprehension of linguistically complex materials
- Begin preparing for GREs (Graduate Record Exam)

Begin major courses:

- CD 220 Intro to CD may be taken Spring semester freshman year - or -
CD 220 Intro to CD and CD 281 Anatomy & Physiology are taken Fall semester sophomore year
- Establish and maintain a strong GPA in major
- Form network of friends for study groups
- Use peers as editors of your writing
- Get to know your advisor so your advisor can get to know you

Consider choosing a minor

- Psychology or Special Education may help you as a clinician
- You may need a "Plan B"

Become more computer literate

Consider undertaking an "informal" observation experience

- Contact practicing clinicians in your hometown and ask to observe
- Consider "shadowing" a clinician for a day

SUMMER BEFORE JUNIOR YEAR

Consider taking 1 or 2 summer courses to:

- Allow you to focus your attention on a course you may find difficult
- Allow you to take 4 courses instead of 5 one semester
- Take prerequisites to put you on the proper course sequence if you transferred in or changed to the major
- Improve your GPA if you must repeat a course in which you earned a grade of D or F

JUNIOR YEAR

Strengthen GPAs overall and in the major

- Consider retaking a course in which you earned a D or F and have the new grade averaged with the first grade. Both grades are reported on your transcript.

Get to know professors, supervisors, and advisors

Consider joining NSSLHA

- Networking with classmates
- Receive ASHA journals
- Receive discount on your first professional membership after graduate school

Continue to develop your writing skills

Add to volunteer and work experiences, especially related to your interests in the major

Consider assuming a leadership role in a college organization or activity

Begin to investigate information on graduate programs

- Career Planning and Placement
- Internet (For example: www.asha.org)
- NSSLHA collection of program brochures
- Library
- Attend open houses offered by area graduate programs dressing and behaving like a student they would want to accept

Identify graduate programs that interest you by considering:

- Geographic location - Where do you see yourself living for 2 years and 1 summer? Urban? Rural? Suburban?
- Size of college or university
- Private or state school
- Cost - Most are significantly more expensive than BSC. Plan on taking out loans.
- Admission requirements - GPAs, recommendations, personal statement, and GREs or MATs

Consider taking additional courses that relate to the profession

- Sign Language
- Quantitative Methods
- Psych of Aging
- Psych of Exceptional Children
- Voice and Diction (especially if you have a dialectical difference)

Read

- Professional journals, textbooks, biographies of individuals with special needs, and any materials just for pleasure

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

Prepare for GREs

- Computer software program
- Review book
- Review course

Take the GREs for the first time

- Appointments are scheduled during the first 14 days of each month with 60 days between each sitting. Plan accordingly if you do not earn a combined score ≥ 1000 on the Verbal and Quantitative portions

If you have been accepted into CD 490 Clinical Practicum for the Fall semester, consider taking a GER or minor course to reduce your Fall course load to 4 course in addition to practicum.

SENIOR YEAR

Visit the campus of programs that interest you

- Talk with the admissions committee chair or program director and students

Refine your consideration of characteristics of graduate programs you have identified earlier (location, size, cost, etc.)

Retake the GREs, if necessary

Develop your resume

Obtain graduate program applications

- Internet, write, or by telephone call (always be polite and pleasant!)

Request letters of recommendation with ample time and autobiographical information

Check application due dates

- Mail applications well in advance of due dates

Compose your letter of intent or personal statement

- Rewrite it several times
- Get feedback
- Proofread
- Send it whether or not the application requires it
- Possible points to address:
 - Does your GPA reflect your true potential? Why or why not? This may be helpful information in extenuating situations. Do not apologize or whine or make excuses.
 - Explain your learning style if you have a documented disability
 - Bilingual? Minority status? Veteran?
 - Work or volunteer experiences
 - Awards and achievements
 - Personal experiences as a client in therapy or with a family member

Prepare for a possible interview

- Be familiar with the program you are visiting!
- What was the last journal article you read?
- What was the last book you read?
- Bring your resume, writing samples, clinic portfolio

Dress appropriately and be on time.