

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

The Master's in Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP) program, a two-year MS-SLP program at Bethel University has a 60-credit curriculum, with a specialty area in speech-language pathology. The three-year program option includes an additional year of preparatory/leveling courses (26 credits). This Christ-centered, faith-based program prepares graduate students to become entry-level professionals who provide competent services in prevention, assessment, treatment, and management to persons with communication and swallowing disorders while maintaining the highest levels of compassion, ethics, cultural responsiveness, and integrity.

Program Mission Statement

The program empowers students to become highly competent, culturally responsive, and compassionate speech-language pathology professionals. Rooted in a Christ-centered framework, we equip graduates to lead lives of impact by expertly assessing, treating, and advocating for individuals with communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan, all while upholding the highest standards of integrity and service.

Program Vision Statement

The program will be recognized as a leading force in speech-language pathology education, renowned for its rigorous academic and clinical training that produces culturally responsive and ethically driven clinicians. We will be known for our innovative approach to addressing critical healthcare needs, particularly in underserved and rural areas, and for fostering graduates who are skilled advocates and agents of positive social change within the profession and their communities.

Accreditation Statement

The Master of Science (MS) education program in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) (residential education) at Bethel University is an Applicant for Candidacy by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), 2200 Research Boulevard, #310, Rockville, MD 20850, 800-498-2071 or 301-296-5700.

Bethel University candidacy is a newly developing program and has not received an accredited status.

Program Values

The Bethel University MS-SLP program is built upon foundational values that guide our every endeavor, mirroring the university's commitment to developing whole and holy persons:

Christ-Centered Service: We are dedicated to living out the teachings of Jesus by providing compassionate, ethical, and bias-free services to all individuals, reflecting Christ's selfless mission of redemption.

Academic and Clinical Excellence: As learners and truth-seekers, we are committed to rigorous academic and clinical training, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and evidence-based practices to ensure the highest competency levels in our students and the highest quality of care for our clients.

Cultural Responsiveness and Advocacy: We are committed to fostering culturally responsive professionals who understand and address diverse needs, ensuring fairness and advocating for equitable access to speech-language pathology services for all, especially those in underserved communities.

Integrity and Accountability: We cultivate character-builders who uphold the highest ethical standards in all academic, clinical, and professional interactions, taking responsibility for our actions and maintaining accountability to our students, faculty, clients, and the public.

Innovation and Impact: We empower our students and faculty to be world-changers and reconcilers, embracing innovative approaches in research and practice to address complex communication and swallowing disorders and to drive positive social change within the profession and beyond.

Program Outcomes

1. Explain the biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural factors that influence typical and atypical speech and language development and swallowing processes across the lifespan.
2. Explain the etiologies and characteristics of speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and swallowing disorders and differences across the lifespan with consideration of anatomical/physiological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural correlates.
3. Apply clinical approaches, methods, and strategies to prevent, assess, and intervene in speech, language, communication, cognition, and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.
4. Adapt various clinical methods and models of service delivery, including assessment, treatment, and management of communication, speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and swallowing disorders based on evidence-informed practice, cultural responsiveness, informational counseling, interprofessional collaboration, and technology implementation.
5. Analyze ethical standards, professional conduct, contemporary issues, cultural and linguistic diversity, and regulations and policies relevant to entry-level professional practice in prevention, assessment, treatment, and management of communication, speech, language, hearing, cognitive, and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.
6. Apply critical thinking, design thinking, problem-solving, and clinical reasoning skills related to service delivery and professional issues in communication and swallowing disorders.
7. Communicate professionally using oral and written methods related to academic courses, research, and clinical settings in communication disorders.

Program Design

All courses (except the courses during Year 1 Summer) are delivered synchronously using best practices in technology, instructional design, and evidence-based learning.

The program conducts intensive student advising (individually and in groups) throughout the course of study. A supportive learning community is achieved through the cohort model.

Three on-campus clinical practicum courses (a minimum of 100 clock hours) and two off-campus clinical practicum courses (250-275 hours) are required over five consecutive semesters.

Besides didactic courses and clinical practicum courses, students are required to conduct clinical research (using single or group case studies) for the program capstone. They also need to take the Graduate Comprehensive Final Exam, consisting of case studies in communication disorders and swallowing.

The curriculum prepares students to take the national speech-language praxis exam offered by Educational Testing Services. Students are advised to take the exam during their final semester of graduation.

Programs in Speech Language Pathology

Masters:

- M.S. in Speech Language Pathology (2-year program) (<https://catalog.bethel.edu/academic-programs/college-of-health-sciences/graduate-programs/speech-language-pathology/speech-language-pathology-ms-two-year/>)
- M.S. in Speech Language Pathology (3-year program) (<https://catalog.bethel.edu/academic-programs/college-of-health-sciences/graduate-programs/speech-language-pathology/speech-language-pathology-ms-three-year/>)

SLPL 500 • Graduate Prep Assessment 0 Credit

A comprehensive assessment before starting the graduate-level courses. Includes a comprehensive multiple-choice questionnaire based on the required undergraduate speech-language pathology foundational coursework. Also includes an intensive interview with faculty members to gauge knowledge, competencies, verbal reasoning, critical thinking, and general professional skills/behaviors.

Prerequisites: Course can only be taken if the student has satisfactorily completed all undergraduate prerequisite coursework. Grade exceptions: Graded on an S/U basis. Special Notes: Course grade determines continuation to master's level courses in the Speech Language Pathology program.

SLPL 515 • Craniofacial Conditions and Velopharyngeal Disorders 2 Credits

Explores anatomy and physiology of the velopharyngeal mechanism for speech in children with cleft palate and craniofacial anomalies. Analyzes disorders behaviorally and instrumentally, examines surgical effects, and applies evidence-based interventions for articulation, resonance, and feeding/swallowing. Emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration across the lifespan.

Prerequisites: SLPL 500 for those students in the 3 year Speech Language Pathology major.

SLPL 525 • Informational Counseling, Ethics, and Culturally-Responsive Practice in Speech-Language Pathology 3 Credits

Examination of major counseling theories in communication and swallowing disorders. Analysis of lifespan counseling principles, including end-of-life issues. Application of evidence-based strategies for diverse clients. Evaluation of cultural and linguistic influences on counseling outcomes. Exploration of ethical considerations, bias, and culturally responsive practice. Development of individualized counseling plans.

Prerequisites: SLPL 500 for those students in the 3 year Speech Language Pathology major.

SLPL 530 • Research Methods in Speech-language Pathology 3 Credits

Description of quantitative and qualitative research methods in communication disorders. Examination of problem-centered questions, research design, methodology, data management, and parametric and nonparametric analysis. Analysis of theoretical frameworks, including interprofessional practice. Application of evidence-based practice, ethics, and clinical decision-making in oral presentations and a written research proposal.

Prerequisites: SLPL 500 for those students in the 3 year Speech Language Pathology major.

SLPL 535 • Management of Communication Disorders in Special Populations 3 Credits

Exploration of communication disorders affecting children and adults with developmental disabilities, hearing loss, autism spectrum disorder, Fragile X syndrome, Down syndrome, and cerebral palsy. Examination of special education laws, disability regulations, and family resources. Application of assessment and intervention strategies in interprofessional collaboration to enhance outcomes.

Prerequisites: SLPL 500 for those students in the 3 year Speech Language Pathology major.

SLPL 540 • Global Service Delivery in Speech-Language Pathology 3 Credits

Application of evidence-based practice in international settings to identify, prevent, assess, and treat speech, language, and swallowing disorders during short-term study abroad. Development of critical thinking, clinical reasoning, cultural responsiveness, counseling, and collaborative practice. Integration of theory and skills through clinical documentation, interprofessional communication, ethical decision-making, and client-centered care.

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SLPL 600 • Language Disorders in Children 4 Credits

Impact of language-based differences and disorders in infants, toddlers, children, and young adolescents. Examination of how language processing deficits affect academic performance and literacy development, including information processing, word memory, word finding, social language, and cognitive abilities. Apply various assessments and curriculum-based intervention techniques to facilitate academic and social development.

SLPL 601 • Speech Sound Disorders in Children 4 Credits

Examination of the characteristics, challenges, and complexities of speech disorders in children, including apraxia of speech and orofacial myofunctional disorders. Exploration of speech assessment tools, standardized tests, and dynamic assessments. Application of recent field theory to formulate and implement speech sound intervention plans within the curriculum.

SLPL 606 • Language and Cognitive-Communication Disorders in Adults 4 Credits

Examination of adult aphasia and dementia, their definition, incidence and prevalence, etiologies, and contemporary approaches for assessing and managing aphasia, using the International Classification of Diseases model and a life participation approach to treatment. Includes cognitive-communication disorders such as acquired brain injury, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and mild cognitive impairments.

SLPL 608 • Assessments and Interventions in Literacy 3 Credits

Analyzes causes and prevention of language disorders, learning disabilities, and dyslexia. Examines phonological, semantic, orthographic, and oral processing affecting literacy. Applies evidence-based assessments for screening, diagnosis, and progress monitoring. Designs interventions for decoding, fluency, comprehension, spelling, and written expression while collaborating to address literacy challenges.

SLPL 610 • Stuttering and Cluttering 2 Credits

Differentiate typical disfluency from stuttering while identifying the nature, characteristics, and etiologies of developmental and acquired stuttering based on current theories. Administer assessments and interpret test results to formulate intervention plans/procedures for clients with fluency problems. Develop counseling support and management plans for adults and children with stuttering or cluttering diagnosis.

SLPL 615 • Dysphagia in Adults 4 Credits

Analyzes adult dysphagia, including etiology, anatomy, physiology, screening, and assessment using videofluoroscopy and endoscopy. Applies evidence-based treatments, compensatory techniques, rehabilitative exercises, and diet modifications. Integrates interprofessional practice, palliative care, patient safety, counseling, and ethics to develop effective, evidence-informed intervention plans for safe swallowing.

SLPL 616 • Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing Disorders 2 Credits

Examines typical pediatric swallowing anatomy and physiology. Analyzes feeding and swallowing disorders from neurological, structural, and behavioral causes in children through age 21. Applies screening protocols, instrumental and behavioral assessments, and quality-of-life questionnaires to develop evidence-informed treatment plans that ensure safe and efficient oral intake.

SLPL 620 • Assistive Technology and Alternative and Augmentative Communication 2 Credits

Analyzes augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems for individuals with complex communication needs. Applies evidence-based assessments to select low-, mid-, and high-tech AAC tools that enhance linguistic, operational, social, and strategic skills. Integrates culturally responsive practices and interprofessional collaboration to support AAC users, families, and communication partners.

SLPL 625 • Clinical Practicum 3 Credits

Applies evidence-based practice in campus and community settings to identify, assess, and treat speech, language, and swallowing disorders. Develops critical thinking, clinical reasoning, cultural responsiveness, counseling, and collaborative skills. Integrates theory with practice through documentation, interprofessional communication, and ethical decision-making to meet diverse client needs.

SLPL 640 • Voice and Upper Airway Disorders 3 Credits

Explanation of anatomic, physiologic, and neurologic bases for voice production and respiration; etiological characteristics and classification of voice disorders. In-depth perceptual/behavioral, acoustic, and instrumental analysis of voice disorders, including formulating prevention and treatment plans. Evaluation and implementation of evidence-based assessment, treatment, and management options for voice and upper airway disorders.

SLPL 645 • Motor Speech Disorders 2 Credits

Description of etiologies, classification, and nature of different types of dysarthria and apraxia of speech in adults. Implementation of assessment batteries and evidence-informed treatment, management, and counseling methods for a diverse array of neurogenic speech disorders.

SLPL 660 • Clinical Externship 3 Credits

Applies evidence-based practice in off-campus educational or medical settings to assess and treat speech, language, and swallowing disorders. Develops critical thinking, clinical reasoning, cultural responsiveness, counseling, and collaborative skills. Integrates theory with practice through documentation, interprofessional communication, and ethical decision-making to meet diverse client needs.

SLPL 690 • Research Project I 2 Credits

Evaluates quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods for clinical and interprofessional research in communication disorders. Designs research projects, formulates questions and hypotheses, and collects primary or secondary data. Integrates literature, theoretical frameworks, methods, results, and discussion to address the research problem with rigor and relevance.

SLPL 691 • Research Project II 2 Credits

Applies quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to clinical and interprofessional research in communication disorders. Designs research studies, collects data, and analyzes results. Emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and written and verbal communication while integrating findings into discussion to address the research problem effectively.

Prerequisites: SLPL 690.

SLPL 694 • Topics in Speech Language Pathology 1-4 Credits

An in-depth study of a particular Speech Language Pathology theme.

Special Notes: Topics courses should serve as elective courses.

SLPL 697 • Capstone Extension 0 Credit

Extension course for continued enrollment; required when the thesis/project course is incomplete. The extension allows students continued access to university resources. Student must be registered in an extension course at the time the thesis/project is granted final approval and receives a grade. Fee applies.

Prerequisites: SLPL 790.

SLPL 700 • Graduate Comprehensive Exam 0 Credit

Completes a comprehensive exam after all coursework, integrating theoretical and clinical knowledge. Demonstrates mastery through written multiple-choice questions modeled on the national Praxis exam and an oral case study analysis. Enrollment occurs during the semester of graduation.

Special Notes: Enrollment is required during the semester of graduation.

SLPL 790 • Thesis I 2 Credits

Evaluates quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods for clinical and interprofessional research in communication disorders. Designs a research study, formulates questions and hypotheses, and collects primary or secondary data. Integrates literature, theoretical frameworks, methods, results, and discussion to address the research problem rigorously.

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SLPL 791 • Thesis II 2 Credits

Applies quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to clinical and interprofessional research in communication disorders. Designs a research study, collects and analyzes data, and integrates results into discussion. Emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and written and verbal communication to address the research problem effectively.

Prerequisites: SLPL 790.