

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, College of Fine Arts & Communication



What Is CSD?

The field of communication sciences and disorders (CSD) focuses on understanding the anatomy, physiology, and cognitive and linguistic skills needed for successful communication as well as the assessment and treatment of communication disorders. Students interested in CSD are usually planning for careers as speech-language pathologists or audiologists.

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) assess and treat communication and swallowing difficulties across the lifespan from newborns to the elderly. An SLP might work in a public school with children who have language disorders due to Down syndrome or autism. SLPs also work in hospitals with adults who have had strokes and need treatment to improve their speech and swallowing abilities.

Audiologists assess and treat hearing and balance disorders. Like SLPs, audiologists work with clients across the lifespan from providing treatment to young children who have received a cochlear implant to older adults who use hearing aids to assist with age-related hearing loss.

Certification as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist requires a graduate degree. An undergraduate degree in CSD at Western is the first step in this career path. Due to an increasing elderly population and an emphasis on providing services to children with special needs, speech-language pathology and audiology are consistently rated as fast growing professions with high job satisfaction.

Program of Study

A major in CSD leads to a Bachelor of Science degree. Within the major, students take classes in American Sign Language; the scientific bases of speech, language, and hearing; phonetics; child language development; and the assessment and treatment of speech, language, and hearing disorders. Across classes, students develop the critical thinking and communication skills needed to be successful professionals.

During the senior year, students who have at least a 3.0 grade point average in the major have the opportunity to complete clinical practica in both speech-language pathology and audiology in our on-campus WIU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. While clinical experiences at most universities are reserved for graduate students, Western prides itself in providing seniors the opportunity to gain hands-on clinical experience at the undergraduate level.

In addition to the major, students complete a minor of their choice. Many students choose to minor in a field that relates to their future career plans such as psychology or gerontology. Some students who aim to become bilingual speech-language pathologists minor or double major in a foreign language such as Spanish. Other students choose to minor in a field for personal growth such as music. Undergraduate majors in CSD must also complete 43 semester hours of general education requirements, including classes in psychology, biology, statistics, and either chemistry or physics.

Faculty

Faculty members have extensive clinical experience across a wide range of professional settings. All faculty who supervise clinical experiences hold certification from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Illinois state licensure. In addition to teaching courses and supervising practica, faculty are engaged in research, serve in professional organizations, present at professional meetings, and publish in scholarly journals.

When I decided to transfer universities, I wanted to be somewhere I felt comfortable yet academically challenged. Although our major is competitive, my classmates in undergrad were great friends and we were able to build a culture of collaboration with guidance from our faculty. Once it came time to accept my offer to the graduate program here at WIU, the decision to stay was a simple one for me to make. –Chad Cunningham, B.S. 2012, M.S. 2014



The hands-on training I received at WIU with hearing aids, seeing patients, and performing diagnostics and aural rehabilitation at an undergrad program is almost unheard of and gives Western students an upper hand when entering graduate school. I will forever be proud of where I came from, and I have WIU's coursework and CSD faculty to thank! –Megan Novak, B.S. 2010

The past two years in Western's Communication Sciences and Disorders program have taught me more than I could have ever imagined! As an undergraduate, I was able to strengthen my clinical skills while working as a student clinician in the speech and hearing clinic, which was an amazing experience! All of my great experiences at Western led me to choose to stay for the graduate program, which is why I am so excited to be a WIU student. –Ashley Schwingle, B.S. 2013, M.S. 2015

Facilities

The CSD department is located on the second floor of Memorial Hall. CSD classes are held in one of two electronic classrooms, and students have access to a student lounge and an undergraduate computer lab and workroom for individual or group study. The WIU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, also located on the second floor of Memorial Hall, has seven therapy rooms with adjacent observation rooms and two audiology booths.

Student Organizations

Students in CSD can join the Western Illinois University Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (WIUSSLHA) and the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA). WIUSSLHA members engage in volunteer, fundraising, and social activities, all of which help develop leadership skills. Each year, students in WIUSSLHA travel to the Chicago area for the annual convention of the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Graduate Program

The CSD department offers a graduate program in speech-language pathology leading to a Master of Science degree. The graduate program is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2200 Research Boulevard #310, Rockville, MD 20850, (800) 498-2071.

For More Information

If you would like more information about the CSD program, please contact Amanda Silberer, assistant professor and program director, at (309) 298-1955, or e-mail csd@wiu.edu. Additional information can be found at wiu.edu/csd, or you can follow us on twitter #WIUCSD.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and individual appointments can be made on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Campus tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisers, faculty, or a financial aid adviser may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10 a.m., and a campus tour is conducted at 11 a.m. You may schedule your visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting "Visit Campus." You may also schedule a visit, tour, or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by e-mailing admissions@wiu.edu.

wiu.edu/csd

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