



Doctorate in Speech-Language Pathology

Loma Linda University is a world-renowned health sciences institution recognized for the emphasis on educating students in a values-based environment that promotes a lifestyle of wellness. The SLPD program provides licensed clinicians an opportunity to upgrade their knowledge base within a convenient and flexible online format.

OVERVIEW

The Doctorate in Speech-Language Pathology is a degree for Master's-level clinicians who want to increase depth of knowledge in the field of speech-language pathology while also acquiring clinical research experience. Graduates of the program will be trained to take positions as leaders, clinical researchers, and university clinical faculty. Current practitioners will gain advanced knowledge in the field of speech-language pathology, with specialized training in evidence-based practice, critical thinking, leadership, legal and ethical issues, and problem solving. Doctoral students will become adept at analyzing and synthesizing the existing research literature as they design and conduct their own clinical study in their area of interest.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It is projected that students will spend just over 2 years in the program (27 months), taking 2 classes a quarter for 9 quarters. Only full-time students are admitted into the program; although, students will have the ability to spend longer in the program as a part-time student if the required Clinical Research Capstone project is not complete by the end of the program.

The program is split into two broad domains. In the research domain, students will be given the necessary background and support to complete an independent research project in speech-language pathology working closely with the assigned faculty mentor in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department.

The process includes developing a valid and measurable research question and writing a research proposal with their assigned faculty research mentor, obtaining IRB approval, implementing the project, analyzing the data, and submitting the results for publication in a scholarly journal prior to completion of the program.

In the content domain, students get exposure to some of the most complex topics in the field. The doctoral seminars in speech-language pathology are designed to provide clinicians with increased depth of knowledge that is evidence-based.

BENEFITS OF THE SLPD PROGRAM AT LLU

- **Depth of Knowledge** – Speech-language pathology has an increasingly broad scope of practice. A Master's degree cannot hope to cover every topic fully in two short years. The SLPD provides a great way to increase your knowledge base in some of the most complex areas in the field.
- **Clinical Research** – Students will be given background in empirical research, critical analysis, and statistics. Then they will create their capstone project: a research study designed and executed by the student with faculty guidance, mentorship, and expertise. In addition to submitting proposals to present the study at a professional conference (such as ASHA) and preparing a manuscript for publication in a scholarly journal, graduates will leave the SLPD program with a clinical research experience.
- **Professional Development** – Increasingly, the Allied Health disciplines are turning to clinical doctorates as the entry-level degree for their profession (e.g., Audiology, Nursing, Physical Therapy). While a doctorate is not required for SLP's, it will upgrade your credentials and help you stay competitive for management and administration positions.
- **Flexibility** – In addition to giving clinicians in the field the opportunity for advancement without committing to the intense rigor of a PhD, the SLPD program at Loma Linda University is designed with professionals in mind. Online coursework, with synchronous classes two evenings a week, allows students to learn from a convenient location. This format enables instructor/student interaction and engagement. In addition, there are three occasions when students will be required to spend 1-2 days on the Loma Linda campus for meetings and presentations.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in speech-language pathology from an accredited institution and six months of professional practice
- Minimum GPA of 3.3
- Current clinical certification (CCC's) and state licensure to practice speech-language pathology
- Completed online application
- Nonrefundable application fee
- Official transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate coursework
- Resume
- Three letters of reference
- Written statement: 2-3-page essay describing your research interests (and experience, if any), your professional experience/accomplishments, why you want to pursue a Doctorate in Speech-Language Pathology, and why you want to attend Loma Linda University.
- Zoom interview (to be scheduled with applicants who pass the first round of screening)

State Regulations for Online Programs

Note that due to legal restrictions created by some state governments, only students from certain states are eligible for the program. Please refer to Loma Linda University's Information page for online distance education programs for a current list of which states are eligible.

COURSEWORK

Research Domain

SLPD 600 Components of Clinical Inquiry
SLPD 610 Capstone: IRB Proposal
SLPD 621 Capstone Planning
SLPD 622 Capstone Proposal
SLPD 623 Capstone II
SLPD 624 Capstone III
SLPD 625 Capstone IV
SLPD 626 Dissemination of Research

Content Domain

AHCJ 318 Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Skills
for Health-Care Professionals
AHCJ 566 Theoretical Foundations of Leadership
RELR 540 Wholeness and Health
SLPD 550 Advanced Seminar in Neuroanatomy
SLPD 570 Special Topics in SLP (taken three times)
SLPD 580 Clinical Issues in SLP
1 Elective from Another Department

COST OF ATTENDANCE

Please review LLU's Find a Program website [page](#) for the most up-to-date information on the cost of attendance or scan the QR code below.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

How does an SLPD degree compare to a PhD?

The SLPD is not as rigorous as a PhD. Our program provides all the training and skills needed to conduct clinical research but does not have the scope of a PhD. This means it is much more manageable with regard to time commitment (most PhDs take 5+ years as a full-time student to complete).

What is the course load like? How long does it take to complete the program?

The SLPD program is designed to be 2 courses per quarter, for 9 quarters (2.25 years) – 51 units in total. We can, however, accommodate students who wish to take courses at a more measured pace.

What is the program like? Is there a dissertation?

The first year is primarily made up of content courses. At the end of the first year, the capstone sequence begins. The Capstone Project (sometimes called an Applied Dissertation) is a written manuscript in publishable form documenting a research project designed and carried out by the student. It is comparable to a dissertation, but less ambitious in scope (dissertations typically consist of multiple studies).

How many students do you accept each year?

This varies depending on the strength of the applications we receive as well as the availability of faculty to mentor in a given area of interest. In order to ensure the quality of the program, we will be restricting the number of students we admit (at most 5 per cohort).

When is the application due?

The deadline for applications is June 1.

Is admission rolling?

No. The best applicants will be contacted to set up an interview sometime in late May.

Is the program traditional (face-to-face), online, or hybrid/blended?

Aside from three trips to the LLU campus it is an online program.

The three visits are:

1. Orientation - September 1st year
2. Research Proposal Intensive - Summer 2nd year
3. Present/ Defend Research Project - December/ January 3rd year

Is this program accredited by ASHA?

No, ASHA does not currently accredit SLPD programs.

Why should I get a SLPD?

The SLPD is beneficial to individuals who wish to take on roles as leaders, clinical educators, clinical administrators, or who wish to conduct their own independent research. For more information, see the results of ASHA's report on Clinical Doctorates in SLP: <https://www.asha.org/policy/g12015-00341/>

Contact Information

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Updated 07/05/2023



LLU at a Glance

>> Founded in 1905 >> A Seventh-day Adventist institution integrating health, science, and Christian faith >> Offers over 200 programs in the health sciences >> Houses eight schools: Allied Health Professions, Behavioral Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Religion >> About 4,000 students >> Over 1,300 faculty >> 2,000 professional researchers >> \$46 million dollars in private and public grants generated each year >> Many service learning opportunities

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