



GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This handbook is not a substitute for the Metropolitan State University of Denver's current graduate catalog or current student handbook. Students should be familiar with the University's policies explained in its graduate catalog and student handbook. This handbook describes program-specific policies and procedures and serves as a supplement to the University's policies and procedures. Students also need to be familiar with all clinical policies and procedures of the MS SLP program. Revisions to the graduate handbook are anticipated. Any substantive modifications to the graduate handbook will be promptly communicated to all students.

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I. Introduction

A. Welcome

A warm welcome to the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS SLP) at MSU Denver. Speech-language pathology is a rewarding profession, filled with people committed to making a difference in the lives of others. You'll find your work as a graduate student, like that of a speech-language pathologist, may be challenging, but always worth it.

The primary aim of a professional curriculum like the MS SLP is to facilitate students' progress from pre-professional coursework to active participation in a professional group. As you have accepted our offer of admission, you have taken an important step in your professional development. As partners in your education, the faculty and staff in the SLHS department (henceforth referred to as "we" or "our") are committed to providing you with the professional knowledge and skills needed for your Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Fellowship experience. In turn, we expect you to be aware of and committed to the expectations of professional education.

The purpose of this graduate handbook is to provide you with an overview of the MS SLP program and its policies and procedures. It should serve as a guide as you make your way through your academic program of study, clinical experiences, and the professional certification process. Please keep the handbook throughout your program of study and for your personal professional records thereafter. The information contained in this handbook will help you plan and record your progress and document aspects of your graduate experience. You are responsible for knowing the information contained within this handbook. If there is information that is unclear, it is your responsibility to seek clarification.

While enrolled at MSU Denver, you are responsible for being informed about all rules, regulations and procedures required for graduate students at the university and the MS SLP program. You should also become familiar with three key policy documents of the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#), linked below.

[Code of Ethics](#)

[Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology](#)

[Membership and Certification Handbook](#)

We wish you the best of luck as you continue to reimagine what's possible!

B. About

The MS SLP curriculum reflects current standards of professional practice and is organized to facilitate the integration of knowledge and skills that are required to function as a competent, entry-level speech-language pathologist. Students also have the option of pursuing a concentration in bilingual service provision in addition to the standard graduate curriculum. This bilingual concentration provides students with advanced study and application of evidence-based service provision with Spanish-only or bilingual (Spanish-English) individuals across communicative contexts.

Student-centered learning is embedded into all didactic and clinical experiences. Students construct new knowledge through active learning experiences designed to promote understanding. We use inquiry-based teaching to deepen understanding of theoretical concepts, transfer knowledge to its clinical applications and strengthen critical-thinking and decision-making skills. We encourage students to consider perspectives and viewpoints that differ from their own, including the stories of marginalized populations.

C. Vision

The vision of the MS SLP program is to serve diverse populations in the clinics and classrooms of the future.

D. Mission

The mission of the SLP graduate program at MSU Denver is to provide a diverse urban population with an inclusive graduate program committed to the interprofessional education and cultural responsiveness of students seeking clinical certification in speech-language pathology. Graduate programs at our institution are charged with converging excellence and innovation; our SLP graduate converges knowledge with skill-based learning to close the theory-practice gap. Amidst changing landscapes in education and healthcare, our program encourages students to think critically and make informed decisions.

E. Values & Aims

We prioritize values that reflect those of the university at large including a shared commitment to community, accessibility, diversity and respect. We aim to:

- Offer an affordable and accessible pathway to a career in speech-language pathology.
- Implement comprehensive academic and clinical curriculum utilizing evidence-based practice.
- Educate clinical scientists who use research to make informed, ethical decisions.
- Apply faculty expertise across classroom, clinic, and community.
- Promote interprofessional education through institutional partnerships.
- Prioritize cultural responsiveness with option to pursue bilingual specialization.

- Nurture lifelong learning with the goal of continuously improving clinical service provision.

F. Professional Culture

The SLHS department seeks to foster a culture of diversity, inclusivity, respect, and integrity that will support the continued personal and professional growth and achievement of all students, clients, faculty, and staff. We believe this is central to the successful preparation of effective speech-language pathologists. To both contribute to and benefit from this culture, all members of the SLHS community, including those in the MS SLP program commit to:

- Be accountable for all personal actions, including acknowledging and seeking support for situations in which inadequate preparation or physical, mental, or health-related conditions might result in unsatisfactory performance.
- Work collaboratively with others in an engaging, respectful manner.
- Promote an environment that respects human rights, personal values, and cultural and spiritual beliefs and dismantles systems of power, privilege and oppression.
- Commit to nondiscriminatory interpersonal and professional relationships.

G. Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The SLHS department supports a culture of open-mindedness, trust and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We commit to creating safe spaces to facilitate respectful discussions about complex issues and provide opportunities for all members of its community to reflect on and challenge their individual assumptions and belief systems regarding diversity.

H. Accreditation¹ Statement

The Master of Science program in Speech-Language Pathology at Metropolitan State University of Denver is a Candidate for Accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. This is a “pre-accreditation” status with the CAA, awarded to developing or emerging programs for a maximum period of five years.

¹ **Accreditation** ensures that **academic programs** provide opportunities for students to prepare to meet relevant credentialing such as certification and licensure. **Certification** ensures that **individuals** (e.g. you the MS SLP student) have met standards of knowledge, skills and abilities as determined by a national professional association (see Section IV.F.a). **Licensure** ensures basic **consumer protection** through adhere to standards endorsed in the state (see Section IV.F.b.i).

II. Getting Started in the MS SLP

A. Proof of Undergraduate Degree and Required Prerequisites

Prior to beginning the MS SLP program at MSU Denver, you must demonstrate completion of a bachelor's degree. If your bachelor's degree was in progress when you applied to the MS SLP program, you must submit an official final transcript with the degree conferral information to MSU Denver's Office of Graduate Studies in advance of starting the program.

The following prerequisite coursework must be completed with a grade of C or better before matriculation into the MS SLP program.

- Anatomy & Physiology of Speech
- Clinical Phonetics
- Diagnostic Audiology
- Language Acquisition & Development
- Language Disorders & Differences
- Neural Bases of Comm & its Disorders
- Principles of Assess & Intervention
- Rehabilitative Audiology
- Speech Disorders & Differences
- Speech Science

In line with clinical certification requirements (Standard IV-A), college-level courses in science and math (with a non-SLHS focus) are to be completed prior to MS SLP program start.

Specifically:

- One course in biological science
- One course in physical science (chemistry *or* physics)
- One course in social/behavioral science
- One course in statistics

Upon entering the MS SLP program, you must provide evidence that you have completed a minimum of 25 observation hours of direct service provision with an ASHA-certified SLP or audiologist. Only activities that fall under the SLP scope of practice may be applied towards the observation requirement.

B. Student Orientation

In advance of summer term, orientation will be held for all MS SLP students both new and returning. The orientation is designed to acquaint students to the faculty/staff and their classmates as well as review program expectations, student responsibilities, and relevant policies and procedures. Representatives from student support services will also be invited to the orientation meeting.

Students are also encouraged to attend university-wide orientation events hosted for MSU Denver graduate students.

C. English Placement Tests for Non-Native Speakers

The primary language of instruction at MSU Denver and the MS SLP program is English. International applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English by obtaining a baccalaureate degree from a university where English is the primary language of instruction and is required for all evaluations (written and oral), or through TOEFL administration, with a minimum score of 20 in each section, a total score of 90 required for admission.

Students must demonstrate speech and language skills in English, which, at a minimum, are consistent with [ASHA's current position statements on students and professionals who speak English with nonstandard dialects](#).

D. Essential Functions

The MS SLP program adheres to the standards and guidelines of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (CAA) of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA). Within these guidelines, the program has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating its students; designing, implementing, and evaluating its curriculum; and determining who has earned the MS SLP degree. Further, the Department has a responsibility to the public that its graduates become competent and caring speech-language pathologists, capable of doing benefit and not harm.

The MS SLP program will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability. Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with the [Access Center](#) upon enrollment. [MSU Denver's Access Center](#) is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

In 2007, the Council on Academic Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD), identified needed skills and attributes (essential functions) of competent professionals across five areas: communication; motor; intellectual-cognitive; sensory-observational; and behavioral-social. The stated intent of identifying essential functions was to educate students about the roles and responsibilities of the discipline as well as provide academic programs with a framework of objective standards and requirements.

Our department has a responsibility to the public to train ethically responsible and competent clinicians who can function in a variety of clinical situations and render a wide spectrum of client care. Throughout their program of study, students are expected to demonstrate (with or without accommodations) the following essential functions in order to acquire the knowledge and skills requisite to the entry-level practice of speech-language pathology.

COMMUNICATION

A student must possess adequate communication skills to:

- Communicate proficiently in both oral and written English.
- Possess reading and writing skills sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
- Perceive and demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication for culture and context.
- Modify communication style to meet the communication needs of clients, caregivers, and other persons served.

MOTOR

A student must possess adequate motor skills to:

- Sustain necessary physical activity level in required classroom and clinical activities for the defined workday.
- Respond quickly to provide a safe environment for clients in emergency situations including fire or choking, and in the application of universal precautions.
- Access transportation to clinical and academic placements.
- Use materials/instrumentation necessary for clinical assessment and intervention activities.
- Provide for or direct one's own personal hygiene.
- Navigate patient/client care environments and be able to move between settings such as the classroom, health care facility, educational, or community settings.
- Access technology for clinical management (e.g. billing, charting, therapy programs).

INTELLECTUAL -COGNITIVE

A student must possess adequate intellectual and cognitive skills to:

- Comprehend, retain, integrate, synthesize, infer, critically evaluate and apply written and verbal information sufficient to meet curricular and clinical demands.
- Maintain attention and concentration for sufficient time to complete clinical activities for up to four-hour blocks of time with one or two breaks.
- Self-evaluate, identify, and communicate limits of one's own knowledge and skill.
- Critically evaluate one's own performance and be flexible toward change to promote professional and clinical process.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modifying behaviors.

SENSORY-OBSERVATIONAL

A student must possess adequate sensory and observational skills to:

- Observe demonstrations and learn from experiences in the classroom and clinical situations.
- Visually and auditorily monitor client responses and use of materials.

BEHAVIORAL- SOCIAL

A student must possess adequate behavioral and social attributes to:

- Display mature empathetic and effective professional relationships by exhibiting compassion, integrity, and concern for others.

- Recognize and show respect for individuals with disabilities and for individuals of different ages, genders, race, religions, sexual orientation, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Recognize the need to learn and apply legal and ethical behavior in all academic and clinical settings.
- Maintain physical, emotional, and mental health required for effective use of intellectual abilities, prompt completion of responsibilities, and development of appropriate relationships with clients and colleagues.
- Maintain composure and emotional stability in demanding situations.
- Adapt to changing environments and situations.
- Understand and respect authority.
- Maintain appropriate classroom and work-place behavior, including punctuality and regular attendance.
- Accept appropriate suggestions and constructive criticism and respond by modifications of behaviors.
- Comply with administrative, legal and regulatory policies in the classroom and clinic.

Students who have questions or concerns about meeting these essential functions are responsible for meeting with the Program Director as early as possible.

E. Student Hub

[MSU Denver's Student Hub](#) is a personalized, secure university information online resource that provides accessibility to confidential student information. You can register for classes and access your class schedule, order textbooks, view your university bill and financial aid information, obtain a degree progress report, update your student information including address changes, etc. You can login to the Student Hub using your single sign in username and password.

F. Roadrunner Student ID Card

Your Roadrunner card serves as your identification badge and should be worn in every clinical setting, unless you are given a different badge to wear at an external site. Students who are not wearing a badge will be unable to engage in clinical activities. Your Roadrunner card is also required to access select buildings/restrooms, obtain a parking permit, prove campus affiliation when accessing the Health Center at Auraria, access campus recreation, provide borrowing privileges at the Auraria Library and collect your RTD College Pass.

G. MSU Denver Email Account

Your MSU Denver email address consists of your username followed by @msudenver.edu. To access your email online go to [MSU Denver's Student Hub](#) and select the Email (Office 365) link. Log in using your username and password.

H. MS SLP Course Registration

Only students who are accepted into the MS SLP program may register for any graduate-level SLHS course. Students will register for courses through their Student Hub. A [searchable schedule](#) of MS SLP courses offered in the coming semester is available in advance of registration.

I. Textbooks and Materials

Students are responsible for purchasing required class textbooks. All written communication in the classroom environment should adhere to the 7th Edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual.

As part of tuition, each student will receive a CALIPSO account to track clinical hours and document acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills. Students will also receive Simucase and ClinicNote accounts.

We make every effort to limit the cost to students participating in clinical experiences. However, students should expect to incur additional costs related to the requirements of clinical sites, including but not limited to a background check and fingerprinting.

J. Academic Advising

Assessment of acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills required for competent entry-level professionals is a joint effort and the responsibility of students, clinical educators, faculty members and program leadership.

At the start of the MS SLP, you will be assigned a graduate program advisor (PA) and you will retain this PA for the duration of your program. Your PA will guide you on administrative/academic advising as well as work with you to customize systems of support within the program and institution that reflect your individual needs. See Section V.E. for a list of offices and organizations with the institutions.

First-year students are required to meet individually with their PA a minimum of twice a semester. Second-year students are required to meet individually with their PA once a semester. Progress towards degree completion and credentialing requirements will be reviewed at these advising meetings with observations/recommendations provided in writing. Beyond these individual advising meetings, group information sessions will be offered and tailored to the needs/concerns of individual cohorts or all MS SLP students.

Responsibilities for cultivating and maintaining a successful advising relationship fall to both the student and PA/department. It is the student's responsibility to be in charge of one's own

academic and professional career and seek out appropriate advising resources when necessary. It is the role of the advisor/department to provide relevant and useful resources to graduate students to foster academic and professional achievement.

III. MS SLP Academic Matters

A. Program Admission

The SLHS Department is committed to recruitment processes that are inclusive of diverse students as well as admission principles that account for the diversity of applicants' education and experiential background. Admission criteria are designed to capture the applicants' strengths and compatibility with the MS SLP's core values.

Eligibility requirements, admission procedures and application deadlines are found on the [SLHS website](#). Only degree-seeking students are admitted into the MS SLP program. Students may not be admitted into the MS SLP program with non-degree seeking status.

Students interested in the bilingual service delivery concentration will apply at the end of the fall semester in their first year. Students must demonstrate native or near-native proficiency with Spanish through standardized assessment of speaking and writing as well as conversational exchange with native Spanish speakers to be eligible for the concentration in bilingual service provision.

B. Degree Requirements

To earn the standard MS SLP degree, students must successfully complete 69 total credits (42 credits of didactic coursework + 27 credits of clinical practica). Students have the option to pursue a concentration in bilingual service delivery in addition to the standard graduate program. The MS SLP program with the concentration in bilingual service provision is 75 total credits (48 credits of didactic coursework + 27 credits of clinical practica). All students must have completed a minimum of 400 hours of direct clinical contact (including 25 hours of observation) as well as a capstone project. All coursework must be completed with grades of B- or higher. Successful completion of these requirements indicates acquisition of knowledge and skill objectives.

C. Knowledge and Skill Acquisition

The ASHA Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) in SLP has established a total of eight standards that must be met before a candidate can be considered for the certificate of clinical competence (CCC) in SLP. These standards include knowledge and skill outcomes across the areas of:

- Professional practice competencies.
- Foundations of speech-language pathology practice.

- Identification and prevention of speech, language and swallowing disorders and differences.
- Evaluation of speech, language, and swallowing disorders and differences.
- Intervention to minimize the effects of changes in the speech, language and swallowing mechanisms.
- General knowledge and skills applicable to professional practice.

The MS SLP curriculum covers the complete range of knowledge outcomes (CFCC Standard IV-C through IV-H) and skill outcomes (CFCC Standard V-A through V-C) set in the [2020 Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology](#).

At the end of a student's program of study the Program Director and Director of Clinical Education will confirm that students have successfully completed all academic and clinical requirements of the MS SLP program and have demonstrate knowledge and skill outcomes consistent with Standard IV and Standard V for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology.

D. Plan of Study

Students are expected to complete the standard MS SLP program in six semesters starting in summer and graduating 23 months later at the end of spring semester. Students must follow the standard plan of study for all didactic coursework and clinical practicum experiences unless formal approval is granted by the Program Director.

The MS SLP curriculum reflects current standards of professional practice and is organized to facilitate integration of knowledge and skills. In line with our commitment to interprofessional education and cultural-responsive practices, our courses have specific learning outcomes dedicated to these important areas.

Within the first 14 months of the program (1st summer through 2nd summer), students complete most of their didactic coursework. The first semester roots students in essential principles of clinical practice while expanding upon undergraduate curriculum in speech and language disorders. In the remainder of year 1, students engage in professional-issues coursework on assessment, cultural and linguistic diversity as well as counseling and evidence-based practice/clinical research. Students extend upon 1st summer coursework with language disorders in adults and literacy disorders progressing to organic disorders of voice and swallowing along with motor speech and fluency disorders by the end of the 2nd summer. Elective offerings during the fall and spring of year 2 include advanced seminars in autism spectrum disorders, augmentative and alternative communication, craniofacial disorders, language and speech disorders in deaf/hard-of-hearing populations and professional advocacy.

Course numbering scheme: All didactic courses begin with a 5XXX; clinical courses start with a 6XXX. For didactic courses in the standard program, the second number represents the general classification of the course:

- 51XX = language
- 52XX = speech
- 53XX = professional issues
- 54XX = additional practice areas
- 55XX = basic science
- 56XX = hearing

The fourth and final number in didactic courses identifies if it is required (X = 0) or an elective (X=5). For example, 5210 is our required speech sound disorders course and 5255 is our elective craniofacial disorders course. Specialty courses for the bilingual service provision concentration are denoted with a "9" for the second number.

- SLHS 5110** Child Language Disorders
- SLHS 5120** Acquired Neurogenic Language Disorders
- SLHS 5130** Literacy: Development & Disorders
- SLHS 5145** Advanced Seminar in Autism Spectrum Disorders
- SLHS 5155** Language and Speech Disorders: Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing
- SLHS 5210** Speech Sound Disorders
- SLHS 5220** Motor Speech Disorders Across the Lifespan
- SLHS 5230** Voice Disorders
- SLHS 5240** Fluency Disorders
- SLHS 5255** Craniofacial Disorders
- SLHS 5310** Clinical Methods: Prevention & Intervention
- SLHS 5320** Clinical Methods: Assessment
- SLHS 5330** Cultural & Linguistic Diversity in Communication Disorders
- SLHS 5340** Evidence-based Practice/Clinical Research
- SLHS 5355** Professional Advocacy
- SLHS 5360** Counseling for Professional Service Delivery
- SLHS 5410** Swallowing and its Disorders
- SLHS 5425** Seminar in Augmentative & Alternative Communication
- SLHS 5945** Foundations of Bilingualism
- SLHS 5935** Assessment & Intervention: English Language Learners
- SLHS 5915** Language & Literacy Development for Spanish-English Bilinguals
- SLHS 6100** Clinical Practica I
- SLHS 6101** Clinical Seminar I
- SLHS 6200** Clinical Practica II
- SLHS 6201** Clinical Seminar II

All didactic courses are 3 credits. Clinical Practica is repeatable for up to 6 credits and Clinical Practica II is repeatable up to 18 credits. Course descriptions are available in the university's graduate catalog.

1. *Standard MS SLP (Sample Plan)*

1 st year	Summer	Fall	Spring
	5110	5120	5230
	5210	5130	5340
	5310	5320	5360
		5330	5410
	6100/6101	6100/6101	
2 nd year	Summer	Fall	Spring
	5220	Didactic Elective	Didactic Elective
	5240	6200/6201	6200/6201
	6100/6101		

2. *MS SLP with Concentration in Bilingual Service Delivery*

Three specific courses are required for the concentration:

- 5915 Language and Literacy Development for Spanish-English Bilinguals
- 5935 Assessment and Intervention of English Language Learners
- 5945 Foundations of Bilingualism

Students who add the bilingual service provision to the MS SLP program can complete the standard plan, with minor modifications and additions. For example, students may take SLHS 5945 their first spring and take 5360 in their second spring semester. SLHS 5915 and SLHS 5935 will be completed in the second summer and fall semesters, respectively. Alternatively, students can complete SLHS 5945 during their second spring and complete 5915 and 5935 after completing the standard MS SLP.

E. Sequence of Clinical Practica

Clinical experiences are incorporated into every semester of the program. Initial clinical experiences include simulated cases, which allow students to practice clinical skills in a virtual (no-risk environment) and screening teams. Graduated onsite clinical experiences take into consideration client needs, types of services and setting. Every practicum is accompanied by a required seminar. Practicum seminars are structured to bridge theory and practice and discuss relevant professional experiences in the context of current clinical experiences.

Beginning in the 1st fall and continuing through the 2nd summer, practica will be completed under the supervision of SLHS faculty/clinical staff. Assuming readiness, students will move into

external practica with certified and qualified field-based supervisors by the 2nd fall. Supervised clinical experience is defined by the CFCC as clinical services (i.e., assessment/diagnosis/evaluation, screening, treatment, report writing, family/client consultation, and/or counseling) related to the management of populations that fit within the ASHA Scope of Practice. The table below shows how clinical education progresses in the MS SLP program.

1 st year			2 nd year			
Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	
Pre-clinical experiences + simulated clients						
	Screening (6100)					
	On-campus tx – graduated assignments based on nature of case & services (6100)					
	On campus dx team (6100) – 1 rotation during 2 nd fall or spring					
			External practica (6200)			

The MS SLP practicum sequence is designed to ensure that students:

- Meet the 400 direct-contact hour requirements for ASHA’s CCC-SLP across the nine major areas listed in CFCC Standard IV-C. A maximum of 25 clinical observation hours are included in this total. At least 325 of the 400 clock hours must be completed while the student is engaged in graduate studies. No more than 75 direct contact hours (i.e. 20%) may be applied through clinical simulations.
- Obtain a variety of supervised clinical experiences across different settings and with individuals across the lifespan, with a range of disorders of differences and from culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Policies and procedures specific to all clinical practica are found in the clinic policies and procedures manual.

F. Capstone

All students are required to conduct a capstone project that follows a single-subject research design. Students define a clinical research question (using a PICO framework) in the spring of their first year; data are collected in subsequent semesters and the project culminates with students’ delivering presentations at departmental colloquia. Alternations to the format of the capstone project require formal approval by the Program Director.

Three faculty/staff members of the MS SLP program will use a capstone rubric to holistically evaluate each student’s capstone project. The capstone rubric includes proficiency applying research processes to address clinical questions and demonstration of professional practice competencies. Students must receive a meets expectations designation on the capstone rubric partial fulfillment of the MS SLP requirements. Students who receive an unsatisfactory rating (below expectations) on their capstone project will be put on an academic Competency Attainment Plan by the Program Director (see Section IV.B.2).

IV. Progressing Through the MS SLP

A. Academic Progress and Student Performance

Students are encouraged to carefully monitor their own academic and clinical progress, and if indicated, initiate discussion, action, or both to assure timely completion of their MS SLP degree. Students can continuously track academic and clinical progress towards degree completion and credentialing requirements using web-based application like the Degree Progress Report and through CALIPSO.

In addition to advising meetings, MS SLP faculty and staff will meet twice a semester (at midterm and end-of-term) to review performance and progress of all students in the program.

As an accredited professional program, a critical aspect of our students' education and preparation is adherence to the standards, ethics, and values of the profession. Therefore, students are continually assessed in terms of academic and clinical performance.

1. *Didactic Coursework*

Within didactic courses, student performance is assessed regularly through a combination of formative and summative measures. Students must meet a predetermined benchmark to demonstrate acquisition of a specific knowledge or skill. Rubrics will be provided in each course that maps student learning outcomes to CFCC standards and map evaluation metrics to student learning outcomes.

The faculty member assigned to a didactic course will be responsible for assigning final course grades. At the end of each semester, the Program Director will update academic performance. Achievement of specific knowledge- and skill-based outcomes will be based on final course grade. Students who receive a final score of 80% or higher in a didactic course will be considered to have met all course-based learning outcomes and have acquired the associated knowledge and skills.

For concerns about a course instructor or didactic course grade see Section VI.G.

2. *Clinical Coursework*

In clinical courses, informal feedback will be offered at one-on-one meetings with supervisors as well as practicum seminars. Formal evaluations will be collected from clinical educators or field supervisors at midterm (formative) and at the end of each practicum (summative) using clinical competency rating scales (CCRS). CCRS map specific clinical skills across four major levels of task-specific performance:

- **Not evident:** Skill absent most of the time. Student requires direct instruction to modify behavior; is unable to change techniques or carry over behavior(s) without direct input from supervisor. Supervisor must model behavior(s) and implement the skills required for client to receive optimal care.
- **Emerging:** Skill is emerging, yet inconsistently demonstrated. Student needs supervisor input to change behavior and shows periodic carry over of behavior. Supervisor frequently provides instructions/models to student clinician in session to ensure client receives optimal care.
- **Present:** Skill is maintained yet needs further development and refinement in line with best practices. Student consistently demonstrates ability to modify instructions/models in session based on client response, modifications are generally successful. Supervisor provides on-going monitoring and feedback on session/skill progression. Feedback focuses on increasing student's critical thinking on how/when to improve skill.
- **Developed:** Skill is consistent and well developed. Student can independently modify/adapt as needed in session(s) to address needs of clients/students, and independently applies critical thinking skills. Students can maintain skills across clients and settings. Supervisor serves as collaborator; provides guidance on ideas initiated by student.

CCRS also map professional effectiveness/behaviors across two levels of performance: satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

The Director of Clinical Education will use constituent scores from the CCRS to compute a composite score. The composite score along with performance in the practicum seminar will determine final grade awarded.

At the end of each semester, the Director of Clinical Education will update clinical performance. Constituent scores will be computer for each area of the Clinical Competency Rating Scales and will inform skill achievement.

For concerns about clinical educators or field-based supervisors and/or clinical grade see Section VI.G.

3. *Grade Point Average and Minimum Grade Requirements*

Students in the MS SLP Program are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 and have no grades below a B-. If a student receives a grade below B-, the course will not be counted toward degree completion, the knowledge and skill areas associated with the course will be deemed unmet, and the clinical hours will not be counted toward the required total of 400. A Competency Attainment Plan will be required for any student who does not maintain a GPA of 3.0 and a B- or better in all coursework.

4. *Incomplete*

The University policy is that an incomplete (I) notation **may** be granted when a student, who is achieving satisfactory progress in a course is not able to complete all class assignments due to extenuating circumstances such as documented illness, military leave, disability, or circumstances beyond their control. In addition, students must have completed at least 75% of total coursework. If an incomplete is granted, the student and faculty member must fill out and sign an SLHS Incomplete Agreement Form (available from Department Coordinator) to clarify what outstanding work the student should complete within the designated time frame.

5. *Withdrawal*

Students who are considering dropping a course should discuss options with their program advisor prior to initiating any action with the Registrar's Office. Course withdrawal may introduce substantial delays in completing the graduate program. Course withdrawal may also reduce financial aid awards.

B. Student Intervention

The Student Intervention Policy guides identification of and intervention for students who are not meeting the program expectations for acquisition of academic and/or clinical knowledge and skills based on student performance in academic and clinical courses. The Student Intervention Policy includes level of support that range from informal support to the creation of a Competency Attainment Plan. If, at any stage, a student refuses to engage in the process, the student may be referred to a Continuation Review (see Section VI.F.).

The Student Intervention process is as follows:

1. *1st Level of Support: Student & Instructor/Supervisor Meeting*

Through interaction that is a normal and typical part of the class or clinic assignment, faculty and supervisors may offer support to students experiencing challenges in meeting program expectations for acquisition of academic and/or clinical knowledge and skills. Students are encouraged to use this level of support for any knowledge and/or skills they believe they are not achieving, or for any other concerns pertaining to successful program completion. Students are encouraged to use this level of support as early as possible to ensure that they receive the support to be successful. The student and faculty member/clinical educator should engage in a discussion focused on identifying additional support and/or steps that might be required to facilitate student success. Additional input from others involved with the MS SLP program should be solicited, as both parties see fit. The results of this level of support may include appropriate accommodations or modifications to assignments and/or provision of additional

support as well as including recommendations that involve changing behavior. All suggestions/recommendations must be shared between the student and instructor/supervisor in writing (email), with an acknowledgment that both parties understand the suggestions/recommendations. This level does not require the development of a formal plan.

For most students, this level of support is sufficient to navigate the challenges that may interfere with student success.

2. 2nd Level of Support: Competency Attainment Plan

If the student and/or instructor/supervisor believe that the support provided at the first level is not sufficient, either part may request the second level of support, which will engage the appropriate program administrator (Program Director if academic intervention; Director of Clinical Education if clinical intervention). The result of this level of support is an individualized, written competency attainment plan (CAP). Students are allowed a maximum of one CAP to address academic deficiencies and one CAP to address clinical deficiencies. Unsuccessful completion of a CAP, or the need for a second academic or clinical CAP will result in a Continuation Review (see Section VI.F.)

The process for developing the CAP is as follows:

- The instructor or supervisor who initiates the CAP (either independently or at the student's request) documents unmet learning objective/s and meets with the student to relay concerns and to gather input from the student about his/her understanding of the learning outcomes and assessment procedures. This information will be relayed to the appropriate program administrator (PD or DCE) along with any written communications between the parties.
- The responsible program administrator (PD or DCE) will seek input from other faculty and/or supervisors to determine the student's progress across courses and/or settings.
- The PD or DCE will meet with the student to gain insight into the student's perceptions of his/her length strengths and challenges, and the student's preferences for support.
- Using the information collected, the PD or DCE will draft the CAP to include the following components:
 - Identify specific learning outcomes identified for intervention. All specific learning outcomes for the program will be mapped to the appropriate course and to CFCC and KASA standards.
 - Identify all assessments used to evaluate the student's progress in meeting the specific learning outcome.
 - Identify the student's current level of performance relative to the specific learning outcomes.

- Specify the actions and timeline necessary by both the student and responsible program personnel to facilitate successful acquisition of the specific learning outcome(s).
- The PD or DCE will schedule a meeting with the student and instructor/supervisor who initiated the CAP to review and refine the CAP draft. The final CAP will be signed by student and the PD or DCE along with any program personnel involved with carrying out the CAP. The signed CAP will be stored in the student's academic file.

C. Student Assessment

Students will complete course evaluations on a semesterly basis. Evaluations of clinical supervisors and clinical experiences will also be provided after each practica.

MS SLP students will be invited to complete an anonymous survey about their experiences at the midpoint of their program and as they near completion of their degree. This comprehensive survey will include questions related to the program's mission and goals, quality of academic and clinical education, faculty/staff engagement, and student services. Students will rank their level of agreement with statements in each of these areas using a 5-point Likert Scale (from strongly agree to disagree) or performance scale (excellent to poor). Graduating MS SLP students will also be invited to semi-structured exit interviews with program leadership.

An annual survey will be delivered to alumni (up to 5 years post graduation) about their specific experiences, including how the MS SLP program prepared them for professional practice and solicit recommendations for improvement. For the first 12 months after graduating, alumni will be provided with the survey every 3 months then annual until 5 years post graduation.

D. Graduation Procedures

An application for Graduation is due by the end of the first week of the semester you plan to graduate. The graduation application can be found under the "register" tab of the Student Hub.

E. Commencement

Graduation is a time of celebration for your academic accomplishments so participation in commencement ceremonies, including MS SLP pinning and/or hooding, is highly encouraged.

A University ceremony takes place at the end of the fall and spring semesters. MSU Denver does not hold commencement ceremonies in the summer. Summer graduates may participate in either the previous spring or following fall university commencements. However, their name and degree awarded will only appear in the fall commencement materials.

MS SLP graduates must make their own arrangements for the purchase of the appropriate graduation regalia well in advance of university commencement. Information will be provided to graduates by the University in a timely manner.

Diplomas are mailed approximately three weeks after graduation to the mailing address information through your Student Hub account.

F. Credentialing

a. *Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology*

The ASHA Council for Clinical Certification (CFCC) in SLP has established a total of eight standards that must be met before a candidate can be considered for the certificate of clinical competence (CCC) in SLP. (See [2020 Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology](#)).

Standard I: Degree

Standard II: Education Program

Standard III: Program of Study

Standard IV: Knowledge Outcomes

Standard V: Skills Outcomes

Standard VI: Assessment

Standard VII: Speech-Language Pathology Clinical Fellowship

Standard VIII: Maintenance of Certification

Successful completion of the MS SLP degree at MSU Denver aligns with Standards I-V. For Standard VI applicants must pass the National Examination in Speech-Language Pathology ([Praxis II 5331](#)). Students are strongly encouraged to complete the during the final two semesters prior to graduation and no earlier than 15 months after program start. For Standard VII applicants must successfully complete a SLP Clinical Fellowship (CF) under mentorship of a certified and qualified clinician. The CF experience may be started only after all academic coursework and supervised clinical practicum have been completed and verified by the MS SLP Program Director as meeting Standards IV (Knowledge Outcomes) and V (Skills Outcomes). The CF experience must consist of a minimum of 1,260 hours and a minimum of 36 weeks of full-time experience (defined as 35 hours per week) or its part-time equivalent. Eighty percent of the CF experience must be spent in direct, **in-person** client/patient contact.

b. *Licensure*

i. *Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA)*

[Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies Division of Professions and Occupations](#) certifies speech-language pathologists in the state. School speech-language pathologists who are paid solely by a school district, board of cooperative services, or state charter school providing

services to exceptional children are excluded from regulation by this office. Access [Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies SLP Application Checklist](#). To obtain a certification as an SLP, you must:

- Hold a master's degree or higher in Communication Sciences and Disorders from an accredited institution.
- Have successfully completed a clinical fellowship accredited by ASHA.
- Have passed a National Examination (Praxis is approved by ASHA).

ii. Colorado Department of Education

The [Colorado Department of Education provides an Initial Special Services License for school speech-language pathologists](#). To obtain an Initial Special Services License as an SLP, you must:

- Hold a master's degree or higher in communication disorders or speech-language pathology from an accepted institution of higher education.
- Successfully complete a speech-language pathology program accredited by the Council of Academic Accreditation of ASHA.
- Completed a practicum or internship with children and students ages birth-21 in a school setting, equivalent to 8 weeks full time (320 hours) under the supervision of a professionally-licensed SLP.
- Successfully passes a state approved SLP specialty area test (Praxis II 5331. Passing Score: 162).

V. Student Life

A. National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association

The [National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(NSSLHA\)](#) is the only national student organization for pre-professionals studying communication and disorders recognized by ASHA. NSSLHA membership is available to full- or part-time undergraduate and graduate students in SLHS. Benefits of NSSLHA membership include: NSSLHA publications, ASHA Leader, one ASHA journal, reduced registration fees for the ASHA convention, and savings on the first year of ASHA membership. [MSU Denver](#) has an affiliated chapter of NSSLHA. Contact nsshla@msudenver.edu for more information.

B. University Resources

- [Access Center \(Disability Support Services\)](#)
- [Auraria Early Learning Center \(Child Care\)](#)
- [Auraria Library](#)
- [Campus Recreation](#)
- [Center for Equity and Student Achievement](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Food Bank \(Roadrunner Food Pantry\)](#)
- [Gender Institute for Teaching and Advocacy \(GITA\)](#)
- [Health Center at Auraria](#)
- [Immigrant Services](#)
- [International Student Support](#)
- [LGBTQ Student Resource Center](#)
- [Office of the Bursar](#)
- [Office of Career Services \(C2Hub\)](#)
- [Office of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Phoenix Center at Auraria \(Sexual Assault & Dating/Domestic Violence\)](#)
- [Student Activities \(Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion\)](#)
- [Testing Services](#)
- [Tivoli Station \(Campus Bookstore\)](#)
- [Urban Leadership Program](#)
- [TriO Student Support Services](#)
- [Veteran and Military Services](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

VI. Student Rights and Responsibilities

A. Equitable Treatment and Nondiscrimination Policy

As a student at MSU Denver, you should be able to live, study, and work in an environment free from unlawful discrimination and sexual misconduct according to Title IX. The [Equal Opportunity Office \(EOO\) at MSU Denver](#) plays an important role in helping to ensure that the civil rights of all are respected and that a diverse, multicultural workforce, student population, learning and work environments are achieved and maintained. The EOO is MSU Denver's central intake and referral office for [unlawful discrimination complaints](#) from students, staff, faculty and visitors.

B. Code of Conduct and Professionalism

[MSU Denver's Student Code of Conduct](#) outlines community responsibilities for all students during their time at MSU Denver. The Code of Conduct outlines the Student Conduct guidelines, process, and procedures. You should take time to read and understand the Code of Conduct to help you along your educational journey at MSU Denver.

The SLHS department seeks to foster a culture of diversity, inclusivity, respect, and integrity that will support the continued personal and professional growth and achievement of all students, clients, faculty, and staff. We believe this is central to the successful preparation of effective speech-language pathologists. To both contribute to and benefit from this culture, all members of the SLHS community, including those in the MS SLP program commit to:

- Be accountable for all personal actions, including acknowledging and seeking support for situations in which inadequate preparation or physical, mental, or health-related conditions might result in unsatisfactory performance.
- Work collaboratively with others in an engaging, respectful manner.
- Promote an environment that respects human rights, personal values, and cultural and spiritual beliefs and dismantles systems of power, privilege and oppression.
- Commit to nondiscriminatory interpersonal and professional relationships.

Speech-language pathology is a professional discipline. Professions require certain behaviors of those who practice them. These expectations apply to situations that focus on professional tasks and responsibilities, on the people served by professional tasks, or on relationships with other professionals. Students must represent the MS SLP program at all times by exhibiting professionalism and ethical behavior. Expectations for professional conduct include attendance and ability to work with others. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, labs, clinics and mandatory program-related meetings, unless excused in advance by the instructor. Absences and tardiness may negatively impact demonstration of required competencies and professionalism, including grades assigned in didactic or clinical courses. Students are expected

to cooperate, participate, share information and show respect for peers. With group projects, each member is expected to actively contribute.

Expectations for professional dress and manner are presented in the clinic policies and procedures document

C. Social Media Policy

MSU Denver requires that all students and employees adhere to the same standards of professional conduct online as they would in the workplace or classroom. Refer to clinic policies and procedures document for policies related to social media and clients.

D. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity must be defined, quite simply, as doing one's own academic work without unauthorized assistance from other persons or resources. More specifically, academic integrity means that student take their coursework seriously and place significant value on learning and engagement in the classroom and while completing assignments and projects.

The MS SLP program will adhere to the MSU Denver's Student Code of Conduct & Academic Responsibilities including its statement on academic integrity. "As students, faculty, staff and administrators of Metropolitan State University of Denver, it is our responsibility to uphold and maintain an academic environment that furthers scholarly inquiry, creative activity and the application of knowledge. We will not tolerate academic dishonesty. We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all activities related to our learning and scholarship. We will not plagiarize, fabricate information or data, cheat on tests or exams, steal academic material, or submit work to more than one class without full disclosure."

E. Clinical Integrity

All those associated with the MS SLP program at MSU Denver will adhere to the principles and rules of ethics described in the [ASHA Code of Ethics](#). These principles and rules will serve as a framework of professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while an SLP graduate student at MSU Denver. These principles include:

- Principle of Ethics I: Individuals shall honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve professionally or who are participants in research and scholarly activities.
- Principle of Ethics II: Individuals shall honor their responsibility to achieve and maintain the highest level of professional competence and performance.

- Principle of Ethics III: Individuals shall honor their responsibility to the public when advocating for the unmet communication and swallowing needs of the public and shall provide accurate information involving any aspect of the profession.
- Principle of Ethics IV: Individuals shall uphold the dignity and autonomy of the professions, maintain collaborative and harmonious interprofessional and intraprofessional relationships, and accept the professions' self-imposed standards.

F. Continuation Review

The MS SLP Program has right and responsibility to re-evaluate the student's suitability for continuing in the MS SLP program. Continuation Reviews are triggered by a student's failure to meet academic and/or clinical standards (see Section IV.A.). Violations of academic integrity as defined by MSU Denver's Student Code of Conduct and/or clinical integrity as guided by ASHA's Code of Ethics also warrant Continuation Reviews. Concerns include, but are not limited to, difficulties with interpersonal engagement (i.e. peer, faculty, staff, and/or field supervisors), repeated class tardiness or unexcused absences; behavior or conduct that disrupts interaction or learning in the classroom or clinic, and acts of academic dishonesty (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism and/or fraud).

Results of the Continuation Review can result in modifications to the student's plan of study and/or dismissal from the program.

Serious issues may result in immediate suspension from the program and a referral to the University's Conduct Officer (see University's Code of Conduct). Serious concerns include those that threaten, cause, or have the potential to cause physical, psychological, or emotional harm to others.

If a situation requires a Continuation Review, a committee will be formed to conduct a formal review of the student's performance in tandem with the procedures established by MSU Denver's Dean of Students. Students have the right to review all written information submitted to the committee and provide additional information and/or a written rebuttal for consideration by the committee. Students may speak to the committee directly (so long as advanced notice of attendance is provided). The student must leave prior to the committee's deliberation. If the student is receiving services from the ACCESS center, the student's Disability Coordinator or another representative may be invited to attend to ensure that the student's right and University's obligations are attended to with regard to ADA requirements.

The committee will make formal recommendations after reviewing all relevant evidence. Results of the Continuation Review may result in modifications to the student's plan of study, removal from the clinical practicum with a failing grade, and/or dismissal from the program. Any action carried out by the committee is to be shared only with those persons involved with the student in an educational capacity.

No more than one week after the Continuation Review, the committee chair will write a statement which describes the nature of the problem, a summary of the facts presented to the committee, and the committee's action. This information will be emailed to the student and Program Director and kept in the student's academic record. Should the student disagree with the results of the Continuation Review, he/she must follow the [University Appeals Process](#).

G. Concerns, Complaints or Grievances

1. Didactic Coursework

Students who have a concern about a course instructor or grade should contact the instructor to discuss and seek resolution regarding their concerns. If a student needs further advice on the issue, they may discuss with their Program Advisor. The purpose of such a meeting would be to advise the students on steps and processes in place for problem solving. This is the preferred process of the MS SLP program. However, depending on the student's preference and/or the nature of the concern, and in alignment with university policy, the student may take such matters directly to the Program Director (who also serves as Department Chair). Typically, the Program Director will ask what steps the student has taken before bringing the concern to their office. In alignment with university policy, the student may take such matters directly to the Program Director (who also serves as Department Chair). Typically, the Program Director will ask what steps the student has taken before bringing the concern to their office.

2. Clinical Coursework

Students who have a concern about clinical educators or field-based supervisors and/or grade assigned in a clinical practica/seminar should contact the Director of Clinical Education. This is the preferred process of the MS SLP program. However, depending on the student's preference and/or the nature of the concern, and in alignment with university policy, the student may take such matters directly to the Program Director (who also serves as Department Chair). Typically, the Program Director will ask what steps the student has taken before bringing the concern to their office. The [University's Grade Appeal Procedure](#) including a [Petition for Grade Appeal](#) is found in the university catalog.

3. Program

Students are advised to review the [university policy regarding appeals and concerns](#). This information includes procedures for Equal Opportunity Grievance and Title IX. Students with concerns related to any aspects of the program's compliance with accreditation standards may at any time voice their concerns directly to:

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
2200 Research Boulevard, #310 Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: (800) 498-2071 Email: accreditation@asha.org

VII. Administrative and Contact Information

Jessica Rossi-Katz, PhD, CCC-A
Professor, Department Chair & MS SLP Program Director
Central Building Room 120
jrossika@msudenver.edu
303.615.1081

Ilana Oliff, MA, CCC-SLP
Director of Clinical Education
Central Building Room 120
ioliff@msudenver.edu
303.605.7609

Shannon Harris, BS
Academic Department Coordinator
Central Building Room 120
sharri82@msudenver.edu
303.605.5782

For a complete list of SLHS personnel visit www.msudenver.edu/slhs