

CMD Undergraduate Program Assessment

Program Review Standards and Areas to be Addressed

1. The department/program's mission supports the university's mission.

As stated in its mission, Southern Connecticut State University seeks to "provide exemplary graduate and undergraduate education in the liberal arts and professional disciplines. As an intentionally diverse and comprehensive university, Southern is committed to academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good."

Both the University and the Communication Disorders program are dedicated to preparing students who are intellectually competent, adaptable to a changing world and who, distinguished by their commitment to life-long inquiry, recognize their obligation to serve effectively in a leadership role within a multicultural society. The program's mission is to prepare graduates for entrance into advanced study in Communication Disorders or for entrance into other human services professions, academic programs, and clinical experiences. The program provides pre-professional education that prepares the undergraduate learner for life-long inquiry, leadership, and adaptation to change, through exposure to state-of-the-art instructional techniques which embrace critical thinking, interaction, assessment, and communication. Dedicated to excellence in pre-professional academic preparation, the program is committed to an outcomes-based education that requires, through formative and summative assessment, a formal student demonstration of acquired knowledge and skills based on program objectives.

In accordance with the University's undergraduate focus, the Communication Disorders program objectives mandate competencies of graduates that not only embody institutional designs but also incorporate prerequisite knowledge and skill requirements of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Council on Academic Accreditation (ASHA CAA) for advanced study in Communication Disorders. ASHA and CAA are the overarching agencies which legislate and accredit graduate study within the Communication Disorders discipline.

The discipline-specific goals of our accrediting organization (ASHA) are well matched to the mandates for academic excellence, service to others, and cultural sensitivity that are outlined in Southern Connecticut State University's mission statement. ASHA requires that undergraduate students who major in Communication Disorders develop comprehensive knowledge of basic human communication and swallowing processes, including their biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural bases" and must also "demonstrate the ability to integrate information pertaining to normal and abnormal human development across the life span, including basic communication processes and the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on communication." The ten required undergraduate courses in our major have been carefully sequenced so that foundational skills are taught in early classes and are then systematically reinforced in later classes (following guidelines suggested in the *Academic Program Review* document of May 8, 2008). For most students, the final course in the undergraduate major is a class entitled *Clinical Practice of Speech-Language Pathology* (CMD 461). This class is designed to provide students with knowledge about the ethical standards and historical roots of our discipline and to give students guidance in bridging foundational knowledge and clinical practice. Additionally, another course that is taken later in the undergraduate

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sequence, *Language Acquisition in School-aged Children* (CMD 419) has a service learning component which involves direct engagement with children in the public schools. As such, our Department feels that CMD 461 and CMD 419 provide the best and most practical venues for assessing student learning outcomes.

2. The department/program has clearly stated program goals and objectives

Program goals

Goal 1: Upon completion of the BS in Communication Disorders, students will have acquired the foundational disciplinary and pre-clinical knowledge and skills that will prepare them for the academic rigors of graduate study in communication disorders or a related human service field.

Goal 2: Upon completion of the BS in Communication Disorders, students will have established a core set of humanistic and ethical professional behaviors that are a foundation for high quality professional practice in a diverse society.

Goal 3: Students who complete a B.S. degree in Communication Disorders will learn the value of participating in service learning activities that enrich the quality of community life and enhance personal growth.

3. The department/program has clearly stated program-level expected student outcomes and methods for measurement

Student learning outcomes and measurement methods

Learning outcome #1: Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize and evaluate current disciplinary information and communicate this knowledge orally and in writing at a level that will prepare them for success in a graduate program in communication sciences and disorders or a related discipline.

Measurement strategies for learning outcome #1:

Direct: Capstone project to be completed in *CMD 461 (Clinical Practice in Speech-Language Pathology)*, which is typically completed in the senior year. This Capstone project will involve both a written and oral presentation of a clinical case observation and will require that students integrate foundational (e.g., anatomical, neurological, socio-cultural, linguistic) and pre-clinical information in a manner that demonstrates each student's ability to think critically.

Direct: Anonymous survey of alumni in their first year of graduate school assessing perceptions of academic preparedness for graduate education.

Indirect: Annual survey of undergraduate majors to establish acceptance rates into graduate programs in communication disorders among those who apply.

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Learning outcome #2: Students will participate in a minimum of 25 hours of clinical observation and 25 hours of service learning that will broaden their experiences with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds those with a range of special needs and will reflect upon their learning in writing.

Measurement strategy for learning outcome #2:

Direct: Students will maintain tracking forms of their clinical observations and service learning hours; these are signed off by accredited faculty/staff. Clinical observation hours are to be completed over the two or three years of a student's undergraduate program; service learning hours are to be carried out while taking *CMD 419 (Language Acquisition in School-aged Children)*. Service learning in the Communication Disorders program is a requirement in *CMD 419*; this course focuses on identifying the ways in which oral language development provides a foundation for reading and learning and discusses the linguistic demands of the school curriculum. Students will maintain a self-reflection journal of their service learning experiences that will be assessed by the course instructor.

Learning outcome #3: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of core content in the discipline by completing a written test that is modeled after the clinical certification (Praxis II) examination that must be completed as an exit requirement for the graduate program.

Measurement strategy for learning outcome #3:

Direct: Students will be required to complete a 30-item objective test of core knowledge in the last semester of their undergraduate program. Individual results will be shared with each student to emphasize knowledge acquisition and to identify areas of individual strength and relative weakness as they prepare for graduate study in the field. Additionally, these data will be considered by the department as one way of reviewing the alignment of course objectives with the knowledge and skills required of our undergraduate students by our accrediting organization (ASHA).

If your department/program offers general education courses, list the outcomes for these courses and describe how they support the goals of Southern's Liberal Education Program (February 2005).

Not applicable

List the outcomes that are expected for students who minor in your program. These should be stated in measurable terms, and there should be a statement of how they are measured. Measures may be quantitative and/or qualitative depending on the discipline and the nature of the outcome to be measured.

Not applicable