



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study awarded by
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Speech Difficulties
2	Programme Code	HEST005
3	JACS Code	B600
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5	Final Qualification	Master of Science (MSc)
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip); Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Medicine, Dentistry & Health
9	Home Department	Human Communication Sciences
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time and Part-time by Distance Learning
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year (Full-time) and up to 3 years (Part-time)
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	January 2007, March 2016, February 2017, January 2020, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The postgraduate (Pg) programme in Speech Difficulties comprises three courses: a) a Pg certificate; b) a Pg Diploma; and c) an MSc. This PG programme in Speech Difficulties will be of particular interest to speech and language therapists and other graduates from the UK and Overseas with a background in phonetics/linguistics who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in evidence-based working with a range of clients across the life span with developmental speech and literacy difficulties. It does not provide a professionally accredited qualification in speech and language therapy, but it does provide continuing professional development, an opportunity to specialise in this area, a research training, and a good basis for an MPhil/PhD. The programme can be followed by full-time attendance or part-time distance learning. The research-led teaching and learning is delivered through attendance at short blocks of study plus distance learning materials to allow those in employment to follow the programme. It incorporates option modules as well as core modules so that students can follow their particular interests. As a result of our recent postgraduate programme developments there are an attractive choice of option modules e.g. developmental language difficulties, acquired language difficulties; cleft palate, case studies; clinical linguistics; some of which can be taken by Distance Learning. The PG programme in Speech Difficulties is the only one in the UK specialising in intervention for, and the relationship between, speech, language and literacy difficulties. The course is well placed in Human Communication Sciences which is a multidisciplinary department covering linguistics, phonetics, acoustics, psychology, speech and language pathology, education, computer sciences and medical sciences. The Division of Human Communication Sciences is one of the leading departments of its kind in the UK and has a particularly strong track record and reputation in the area of speech, language and literacy difficulties. Further information is available on the departmental website at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/health-sciences>

16. Programme aims

The Postgraduate Programme in Speech Difficulties aims to:

- Provide students with a sound understanding of current research into the nature of speech difficulties, including cleft palate speech, and in particular the relationship between speech, language and literacy development.
- Develop students' critical understanding of research methods and design.
- Familiarise students with a range of analytical approaches necessary to investigate spoken and written language development and difficulties.
- Examine domains associated with spoken and written language difficulties, in particular cognitive, psycholinguistic, educational and psychosocial.
- Design, implement and evaluate intervention for individuals or groups with spoken and written language difficulties in a range of contexts.
- Develop professional research skills, e.g. oral and written presentations of research.
- Allow students to develop their own interests through option modules (Dip and MSc) and a dissertation (MSc).
- Provide students with a sound foundation for PhD research and career development in HE, or Education, the NHS or the private sector.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

Postgraduate certificate:

K1	Knowledge of current research into spoken and written language development and difficulties across the lifespan.
K2	Understanding of the impact of speech difficulties on school, home and social life, and later employment and relationships.
K3	Knowledge of a range of methods used in the investigation of spoken and written language difficulties.
K4	Knowledge of current assessments and interventions for children with speech, language and literacy difficulties.
K5	Knowledge and understanding of the principles of evidence-based practice.

Postgraduate diploma includes K1–5 plus the following:

K6	Further knowledge and understanding of chosen option topics.
K7	Knowledge of a range of research methodologies used in social sciences.
K8	Critical understanding of the application of research methodologies.

MSc includes K1-8 plus the following:

K9	Advanced knowledge and understanding of chosen area of study within the field of speech and literacy difficulties.
K10	Further knowledge and understanding of the process of research.

Skills and other attributes:

Postgraduate Certificate:

S1	Comprehensive search for relevant literature from a variety of sources.
S2	Synthesize research and practice from different perspectives, review relevant literature critically and develop a coherent and sustained argument in writing.
S3	Skills in designing assessment and intervention tasks suitable for children with spoken and written language difficulties.
S4	Skills in phonetic transcription and use of instrumentation, e.g. acoustics, electropalatography.
S5	Ability to evaluate the evidence base for practice.

Postgraduate Diploma includes K1–5 plus the following:	
S6	Application of acquired knowledge to further study of chosen topics (via options).
S7	Competency in appropriate quantitative and qualitative research design and methods in the social sciences.
S8	Ability to apply appropriate research methods to address key questions about speech and literacy difficulties.
MSc includes K1–8 plus the following:	
S9	Ability to critically analyse a chosen area, identify questions for investigation and carry out appropriate research procedures to address those questions, showing awareness of ethical issues involved.
S10	Coherent presentation of this research process, with an evaluation of the findings, verbally and in a written form via the project report.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

A range of teaching and learning methods are employed including lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical workshops and distance learning (including discussion boards) via MOLE according to the nature of the material to be learned. Teaching includes seminar and workshops to allow students to engage as active participants in the learning process. This is particularly important in areas such as phonetic transcription, critical analysis, research presentations and other group activities. Broadly, lectures, seminars, and guided reading will be used to develop the knowledge base outlined in Section 17 K1-10 above; workshops, tutorials and assignments will be used to develop the application of this knowledge and develop skills S1-S10. Distance learning materials will be used for both. The theme of theory and practice links will run through all teaching and learning sessions. Core Modules are taught in short blocks with distance learning materials. Options include a range of deliveries so that full-time students can attend regular classes, while part-time distance students can still have a choice of modules.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Assessment varies slightly from module to module. For the most part, assessment consists of coursework exercises while the module is in progress (e.g. research design and statistics) or an assessment at the end of the module (e.g. an essay, assignment or critique). The Research Project is assessed by means of a 12,000-word dissertation. Module assessments are tailored to the requirements of the specific skill, ability, activity or knowledge areas covered, and include both theoretical and practical aspects. The assessment schedule is structured to provide feedback from early on in the course and to avoid overloading students at any one time.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

The learning outcomes for the Postgraduate Programme in Speech Difficulties have been developed in parallel with our other 2 Postgraduate Programmes in a) Language and Communication Impairments in children (LACIC); and b) Acquired Communication Difficulties.

This ensures that in addition to subject specific content and skills, students also acquire general research skills and transferable skills, and emphasis is placed on their own personal and career development.

The Strategic Plan of the University of Sheffield informed the design and the content of the curriculum, <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan> ensuring, for example, that teaching is informed by current developments in research.

In addition, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Handbook for Practice (*Communicating Quality 3*) has influenced the development of this programme.

20. Programme structure and regulations

PG Certificate in Speech Difficulties is a one-year part-time distance learning course. Students who successfully complete four core modules (Total 60 M-level PG credits) specified will be eligible for this PG Cert award or can transfer to the Diploma or MSc courses (see below).

Core Modules: Students complete 1) Developing an Evidence Base for Practice and then EITHER 2a) Spoken and Written Language; 2b) Speech Difficulties 1: Nature and Investigation; 2c) Speech Difficulties 2: Intervention and Management OR 3a) Assessing & analysing cleft palate speech; 3) Intervention with cleft palate speech and 3c) one of Spoken and Written Language; Speech Difficulties 1: Nature and Investigation; Speech Difficulties 2: Intervention and Management.

Diploma in Speech Difficulties is a one -year (full time) or two-year (part-time distance learning) programme. A full-time student will complete all the modules in one calendar year. A part-time student will complete the modules as follows:

Year One: Students complete four core modules (60 credits) specified in the PG Certificate course (see above)

Year Two: Students complete the 5th core module (Research Methods) listed in Year 1 of the Masters (below) and three option modules of 15 credits each (60 credits) - Total 120 credits.

Students who complete these 8 modules successfully will be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Speech Difficulties or can transfer to the MSc. Students who are unable to complete the 8 modules within the maximum registration period but who have successfully completed the 4 core modules specified for the Postgraduate Certificate in Speech Difficulties will be eligible for this PG Cert award.

The MSc in Speech Difficulties is a one -year (full time) or two/three-year (part-time distance learning) programme. A full-time student will complete all the modules in one calendar year. A 2-year part-time student will complete the modules as follows:

Year One: Students complete four modules as per the PG Certificate in Speech Difficulties (see above) plus Research Methods A and B (total: 90 credits).

Year Two: Students complete two further option modules of 15 credits each (30 credits) and submit a dissertation based on their chosen research project (60 credits) – Total 90 credits.

To be eligible for the Masters award, students must have acquired 180 credits from the successful completion of Year One and Year Two modules as prescribed. Part-time students who transfer to the MSc from the Certificate or Diploma courses spread the MSc modules over a 3-year period. Students who transfer will normally have achieved an average mark on Year One and/or Year Two modules of 60 or over, with no module mark below 55. Students who do not complete the Masters' programme within the maximum registration period but who have accumulated 120 credits from the Year One and Year Two modules above, will be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Speech Difficulties. Students who have accumulated 60 credits for the four core modules specified for the Pg Certificate in Speech Difficulties will be eligible for this PG Cert award.

Please refer to the [Programme Regulations](#), [General University Regulations](#) and the [On-line Directory of Modules](#) for detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules.

21. Student development over the course of study

This curriculum has a particular focus on developmental speech and literacy difficulties and has been tailored to the needs of both full-time students and to part-time students who are working. It targets the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for developing evidence-based practice, and research. Students can follow the programme full-time for one year or part-time with distance learning over two or three years. Students can register for an MSc from the beginning of their studies or move from Certificate to Diploma to MSc (subject to permission of the programme director and based on satisfactory progress). Throughout the programme a personal tutor will help support learning and students receive feedback on each assessment prior to submitting the next one.

Students on the **PG Certificate** will study 4 modules which focus on speech and literacy development: assessment and management of speech difficulties and evidence-based practice. Students also have the opportunity to take a specialist track in cleft palate speech within the certificate, by taking the two cleft palate speech modules. Students will reflect on their own practice, develop critical evaluation and writing skills that they can take to their workplace or build on in this programme. Students can complete their studies at this point or move on to the Diploma or Masters in Speech Difficulties.

Students on the **Diploma** course add to the Certificate modules a module in research methods which strengthens their critical evaluation skills and provides a foundation for subsequent research projects. In addition, students choose 3 options which in order to pursue their own interests and topics relevant to their current or future employment. This allows the development of more in-depth knowledge and understanding of specific topics in the field, and the opportunity to apply skills in evaluation through for example a case study or critical review.

In the **Masters'** course, students add to the above a research project where they use their knowledge and understanding of research in the field to complete a written dissertation. This highlights the research process as well as the specialist content and includes seeking ethical approval to carry out the project. A project supervisor is allocated to each student and provides guidance and feedback at various stages of the project.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available in the University's On-Line Prospectus at www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/prospectus.html and also in the Health Sciences School website at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/health-sciences>

Applicants should have a First Class or Upper Second degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline which normally includes a background in phonetics such as Linguistics/Phonetics, Speech/Computer Sciences, Speech and Language Therapy. Candidates with a diploma or ordinary degree in speech and language therapy or other can be accepted if the candidate can show continued learning and experience after the first qualification; such candidates may however be recommended for the PG Certificate or Diploma in Speech Difficulties in the first instance. Non-native speakers of English require an IELTS score of 7 or above with at least 6 in each component, or equivalent.

23. Additional information

The design of the course above is to allow maximum flexibility for part-time students who are likely to be working as speech and language therapists or similar. Full-time students are encouraged to take advantage of other teaching and learning opportunities in the department, for example regular research seminars. Students who wish to update on phonetics or other foundation subjects may be able to do so by special arrangement with the tutors involved.

This programme does not result in a professional qualification in speech and language therapy (for that see the MMedSci in Clinical Communication Studies) but does provide continuing professional development for speech and language therapists and related disciplines who wish to specialise in or carry out research into speech and literacy development and difficulties.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.