



Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	Speech and Language Therapy
2	Programme Code	HEST018
3	JACS Code	B620
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Master of Medical Science (MMedSci)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	Masters
6	Intermediate Qualification(s)	None
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Medicine, Dentistry and Health
9	Department	Human Communication Sciences
10	Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme	Dentistry / Biomedical Sciences
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	A 3-year period, including 10 weeks block clinical placement
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, Health and Care Professions Council
14	Date of production/revision	January 2021, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The MMedSci (Speech and Language Therapy) is a three year calendar postgraduate programme to qualify as a speech and language therapist. The programme is accredited by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), and graduates from the programme can join the practice register for speech and language therapy. All students self-fund their places on the programme and complete a range of speech and language therapy placements across the local regions and in the Philippa Cottam Communication Clinic (PCCC) which is the in-house clinic in the Department of Human Communication Sciences (HCS).

The Department of Human Communication Sciences at the University of Sheffield is an active teaching and research department. It has a multidisciplinary staff, made up of speech and language therapists, psychologists, and linguists. It is able to cover a wide range of specialisms within speech and language pathology, including developmental and acquired communication impairments, clinical linguistics, cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology and education. Teaching is informed by the research activities of staff. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, 100% of our research impact was world-leading or internationally excellent and we were in the top 10 of Russell Group Universities for research outputs. Students benefit from learning at the forefront of current knowledge and are encouraged to develop a critical and reflective attitude to theoretical hypotheses and their application to clinical practice.

The Department has its own clinic with observation and video recording facilities. The equipment includes computerised technology for the recording, analysis and management of all aspects of speech communication. Further information is available on the departmental website at [The Philippa Cottam Communication Clinic | Health Sciences School | The University of Sheffield](#)

The curriculum is organised around six themes: Biomedical Sciences; Communication; Participation & Society; Research Methods; Key Clinical Topics and Professional Practice. The curriculum provides balanced coverage of the core knowledge, interpersonal and practical skills and attitudes necessary for working as a Speech and Language Therapist in a contemporary healthcare and educational environment.

Further information is available at the departmental web site <http://shef.ac.uk/hcs>.

16. Programme aims

The MMedSci (Speech and Language Therapy) has the following programme aims consonant with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield:

- to provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment that includes high-quality learning resources and a curriculum based on current research and scholarship;
- to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the graduate to work as a speech and language therapist;
- to enable the graduate to develop the necessary competencies in order to assess and manage a range of communication and swallowing disorders at the appropriate entry level to the profession;
- to equip students with the academic and professional skills needed to foster a positive attitude towards evidence-based practice and lifelong learning.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:

K1	Integrated knowledge and understanding of communication pathology and its contributory disciplines, including Biomedical Sciences, Psychology & Linguistics;
K2	Mature understanding of the impact of communication impairments on a person's activity and participation in society;
K3	Knowledge and understanding sufficient to critically evaluate and independently contribute to the evidence base for effective practice in speech and language therapy;
K4	Advanced knowledge and understanding related to the assessment of communication difficulties and the provision of effective intervention;
K5	Integrated knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, educational and healthcare contexts relevant to the practice of speech and language therapy.

Skills and other attributes:

S1	Effective use of written and oral modalities to discuss, describe and evaluate concepts, theories and information in the subject area of communication disorder;
S2	Ability to undertake differential diagnosis of communication disorders across the lifespan;
S3	Ability to implement appropriate management plans for the range of communication disorders encountered in adults and children;
S4	Ability to work effectively as part of a multi-professional team;
S5	Effective interpersonal and communication skills to work with patients, carers, colleagues and others;
S6	Ability to evaluate swallowing behaviours and manage disorders of swallowing at the appropriate entry level to the profession.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods which aim to build on the students' previous knowledge:

Induction procedures: students receive reading packs prior to the course to orientate entrants to the subject area. These are followed by linked support tutorials early in semester one. Additional information is provided via year-specific Student Handbooks.

Lectures are used widely in modules which have Communication as a key theme, and convey core information on language pathology and linked disciplines.

Tutorials involve small-group teaching sessions. They take place throughout the course, and are used to support lectures in which students learn about speech, language and communication by enabling the application of knowledge to clinical settings, and the development of practical skills in areas of speech and language analysis. As such they particularly focus on assessment and management of communication impairments, and examine the evidence base for effective clinical practice. Tutorials are also an important component of the

Professional Practice modules, where small group and individual tutorials take place prior to work placements. In addition they are used to reflect on feedback from placements and to plan individual learning objectives for subsequent modules.

Seminars & workshops are used throughout the course, and are used widely across a variety of modules, e.g., Research Methods and Statistics, Practical linguistics. The seminars often involve students completing exercises in information gathering and subsequently communicating information to fellow students. They encourage active and group learning strategies.

Case-based learning exercises are used within the Key Clinical Topics modules to facilitate the application of theoretical knowledge to clinical cases, and to enable the student to identify relevant information sources and to integrate diverse information as applied to a particular clinical case.

Independent study is essential to successful completion of the programme. Independent study is necessary to support the workshop, seminar and case-based learning activities described above.

Work-based placements take place in the University clinic, in schools or in NHS or independent practice clinical facilities. These provide students with practical experiences in the assessment and management of communicative disorders and impairments in swallowing. Clinical placements are carefully structured in order to give the student experience of a range of communicative impairments in both adults and children, and the student works from observational placements, to supervised practice, to more autonomous clinical work.

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

The programme employs a variety of assessment methods, and these are matched to the objectives and planned outcomes of individual modules.

Summative assessment of knowledge and skills uses a variety of methods. These include examinations and coursework to assess attainment of knowledge objectives. The link between knowledge and clinical situations is encouraged through innovative procedures such as those based on clinical scenarios. Practical assessments cover speech and language analysis skills, and the assessment and management of communication and swallowing disorders. Project work, including portfolios of coursework and a final year dissertation are also used.

Regular formative assessment in the form of practical exercises and presentations takes place throughout each teaching semester. This allows monitoring of progression towards learning objectives in a number of domains.

19. Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statements for Healthcare Programmes

[Subject Benchmark Statement: Health Studies](#)

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (2014)

[The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#)

University Strategic Plan

[Our vision | Vision](#)

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)

[Contact us - Learning and teaching strategy 2016-2021 - Our approach - Learning and teaching - Staff - The University of Sheffield](#)

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' guidelines for pre-registration speech and language therapy courses

https://www.rcslt.org/about/Courses_and_training/curriculum_guidelines_2011

The Health Professions Council Standards of Education and Training for Health Professionals: [Standards of education and training |](#)

The Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists: [Speech and language therapists |](#)

20. Programme structure and regulations

The MMedSci (Speech and Language therapy) is a part-time course that is taught over three calendar years. It is a non-modular programme, in the sense that all modules have to be successfully completed in order for the award of the MMedSci. In addition, all Year One modules have to be passed before the student can progress to Year Two of the programme, and all Year Two modules have to be passed before the student can progress to Year Three of the programme.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/regs>.

21. Progression through the programme structure

Students are required to pass all modules in Year One in order to progress to Year Two, and all Year Two modules to progress to Year Three. The award of the MMedSci also requires that all Level Three modules are passed.

Year 1 encourages the student to identify competencies that have been developed in previous learning and occupational experiences and to apply these to the new domain of speech and language therapy. Introductory modules in the areas of Communication and Biomedical Science, alongside introductory study packs in language, cognition, communication, participation and society, establish broad frameworks for knowledge and skill development. Within the Level One Professional Practice module students develop knowledge of clinical methods, observation skills in clinical interactions, and supervised clinical practice allows the student to develop skills in case history taking, information gathering and evaluation of communication difficulties.

Year 2 extends students' knowledge of communication and communicative difficulties through Key Clinical Topics and Communication modules focusing on communication disorders in both adults and children. Modules on speech, language and hearing sciences develop new knowledge and skill objectives for large domains of human communication, and courses on Complex Communication Impairment in children and adults, and case-based learning exercises facilitate the integration of knowledge and skills, and their application to clinical cases. Knowledge gained in Biomedical Sciences is also further developed through topics in clinical neurology, swallowing disorders and ENT medicine. Students also gain in-depth knowledge in research methods and statistical techniques and apply this in practical activities. Within the Professional Practice modules, students expand their clinical skills and gradually move to more independent clinical work with a range of client groups context.

Year 3 extends students' knowledge of communication and swallowing difficulties through the Key Clinical Topics and Language Analysis modules. Students develop critical analysis skills required to evaluating the evidence base in speech and language therapy and/or human communication and its disorders. Within the Key Clinical Topics and Professional Practice modules, the student gradually moves to more autonomous clinical work with a range of client groups. Students also learn more about work-place issues, such as multidisciplinary team working, ethical issues in healthcare, and working within contemporary healthcare structures to facilitate the transition from education into the workplace. An important aspect of Level 3 is the clinical dissertation project evaluating the evidence base in speech and language therapy and/or human communication and its disorders, which provides the student with critical analysis skills relevant for use in their future employment in an evidence-based healthcare and education context.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/courses/2021/speech-and-language-therapy-mmedsci>

Applicants should have a First class or Upper Second degree and are *likely* to have a cognate discipline (e.g., Psychology, Linguistics, Education, Biomedical Sciences, Human Communication Sciences). Applicants with a 2:2 may be considered if their practical experience is particularly strong. It is expected that applicants will show insight into the speech and language therapy profession. All offers are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and a satisfactory Occupational Health check. Applicants whose first language is not English, are required to meet the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' and Health and Care Professional Council requirements of IELTS average score of 8 or above, with at least 7.5 in each component.

23. Additional information

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hcs>

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 <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.