

## LSUHSC Speech-Language Pathology Program Thesis Option

Students enrolled in the Master of Communication Disorders (M.C.D.) program may choose to complete a thesis option. This option will require students to complete an original research project that contributes to the scientific literature that is of publishable quality. Students who complete the thesis option may choose to not do the Master's comprehensive examination. The faculty in the Speech-Language Pathology program must approve your request to complete a thesis based on your standing in both your clinical work and your coursework. A Master's thesis will provide the opportunity for students to learn research skills that may have applicability in many other domains. Students will gain skills in critical thinking, data analysis, and writing. A thesis requires good organizational and planning skills, and a commitment to working to project completion. The M.C.D. program follows the thesis guidelines outlined by the **LSUHSC School of Graduate Studies** (<https://graduatestudies.lsuhs.edu/>).

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What steps do I take?

The **Thesis Steps and Checklist** (link to form) document will lead you through the steps and documentation that must be completed.

#### When do I need to decide?

If you are interested in pursuing a Master's thesis, you should start discussions with the program director or a potential advisor early in your program, preferably in the first or second semester of graduate study. You should also complete the **Thesis Interest Form**. Parts of the process, such as narrowing a research question and obtaining human research approval, can take time. It is difficult to fast track a thesis. You must have your thesis and committee approve your thesis proposal by the end of your second semester in graduate school.

#### How do I choose an advisor?

Your advisor must be a full-time doctoral-level faculty member in the Speech-Language Pathology Program. A good place to start is in the **Faculty/Staff** section ([LSUHSC School of Allied Health Professions](#)) under the Speech-Language Pathology program tab on the website. If you are uncertain who qualifies, talk with the Speech-Language Pathology Program Director, **Dr. Banajee** ([LSUHSC School of Allied Health Professions](#)).

Your thesis committee must contain three graduate faculty members, one of whom must be from a department different than your department. This typically includes all faculty who teach or who supervise clinical practice. Committee members must have at least a master's degree, but a Ph.D. is not required. You and your advisor may also consider faculty outside of Communication Disorders and Allied Health if the individual meets the qualifications outlined by the **LSUHSC School of Graduate Studies** ([Dissertation Guidelines Manual.pdf \(lsuhsc.edu\)](#)).

#### How do I gain approval to write a thesis?

The program director will consider your research interests and will bring your request to a faculty meeting where the entire faculty, including clinical faculty, will vote on your request. Students must be in good standing in clinical training and coursework and must have a GPA of at least 3.5. If approval is

granted, the program director will assign a thesis advisor. After your faculty advisor is established, both your advisor and you will sign the [Thesis Contract Form](#), which signifies your commitment to the project.

Do I have to register for additional courses to complete a thesis?

Yes. In the semester following your approval to complete a thesis, you will register for SPTHAUD 6298 (1 credit of Independent Study under your advisor) each semester until you complete your thesis defense.

What if I begin the thesis option and change my mind?

Students who begin the thesis option, and then elect to discontinue work on the thesis will be required to complete a library research study in an area of communication sciences and disorders under the guidance of the student's thesis advisor. This research project will satisfy the requirements for a grade of 'S' for SPTHAUD 6298 (1 credit of Independent Study) that the student registered for as a requirement of the thesis option. The student will also have to complete the comprehensive examination. More information is outlined in the student handbook under '**Thesis Option**'.