FAQs: Applying to the SLP Graduate Program

How many letters of recommendation do I need?

Every university has different requirements for the number of letters of recommendation needed. CMU requires three letters of recommendation. However, you should check with each individual school you are applying to through CSDCAS or through their individual websites, as each may have different requirements for the number of letters they require and who must write those letters (e.g., minimum of two from CSD program). CSDCAS requires a minimum of three letters, but allows you to have up to five letters.

Who should I ask for letters of recommendation?

You should ask for letters of recommendation from individuals who know you best. These letters should be written by someone who can describe your skills, accomplishments and personality. Colleges value recommendations because they reveal things about you that grades and test scores cannot, provide personal opinions on your character, and show who is willing to speak on your behalf. Within the department, this could include instructors that you have had for several courses, someone you have done research with, or the clinical instructor(s) you had for CSD 494 or 495. Outside of the department, many students choose to ask for letters from individuals who have supervised them in work or volunteer settings.

Before asking people to write letters of recommendation for you, it is important to check the requirements of each school you are applying to in order to determine if there are certain types of people that you will need to have write your letters. For example, some schools may require that two of your letters come from individuals in the CSD department and your third letter can come from anyone (e.g., supervisor, boss, volunteer coordinator, professor from another department, etc.).

How should I ask for letters of recommendation?

It is recommended that you first set up a meeting with your possible letter writers. Take some time to speak with them and make it easy to for them to give positive, detailed information about your achievements and your potential. Ask if they feel comfortable writing you a letter of recommendation. Be careful not to be presumptuous with your folder presentation. Some letter writers prefer that you don't have the folder with you. If you do decide to bring the folders with you, don't label them with the letter writer's name before asking if they are willing to write a letter for you.

Should I waive my right to view letters of recommendation?

It is recommended that students waive their right to view the letters of recommendation. When students waive their right (i.e., are unable to view the letter of recommendation), letter writers tend to be more honest and, therefore, admission officers will have more trust that the letters are an accurate representation of the applicant.

What should I put in my folder for letter writers?

Your folder should contain:
- A table listing the schools you are applying to, the application deadline, and instructions on how to submit a letter to that school
  - If your letter writer will need to print and mail any letters, you should include copies of any forms they will need to fill out as well as envelopes that are pre-addressed and stamped
- An unofficial transcript
- Your resume/CV with a brief description of each activity and your role
  - Career Services can help in developing and reviewing you résumé (https://www.cmich.edu/ess/academic_advising_assistance/career_services/Pages/reach.aspx)
- A picture of yourself (optional)
- Any additional materials the letter writer requests

Should I write thank you notes to letter writers?

Thank you notes are optional, but recommended. If you choose to send thank you notes, be sure to tell your references where you're going (if possible) and let them know how much you appreciate their support. This will bring your application "full-circle" and show your letter writers the importance of their contribution.

How/when should I provide a reminder to a letter writer who isn't following through?

If you are concerned that a letter writer is not going to submit a letter of recommendation on time, a polite email reminder can be sent. If possible, it is also helpful to use the information your letter writer gave you in terms of when you should expect the letter to be done as a guide to determine when you should send a reminder.

How many schools should I apply to?

This is a very individualized decision. The average number of schools students apply to is five or six schools, but the total number of schools students apply to typically ranges from two to

twelve. You have to decide what makes you most comfortable. Be sure that you do not apply to any schools that you would not actually be willing to attend.

How should I pick which schools to apply to?

One website that can help you find schools to apply to is http://www.asha.org/edfind/. You are able to search by degree type and areas of study. It provides information about the program, application requirements *(be sure to also go directly to the school's website to check for the most up-to-date information)*, and program statistics. Students often make decisions about which schools to apply to based on the location of each school, the opportunities that a school offers in their area(s) of interest, the cost of attending each university, the availability of scholarships and graduate assistantships at each university, and/or the amount of time it takes to complete each program.

If I get accepted to multiple schools, how should I pick which to attend?

The process varies from person to person. You will likely have similar experiences in the courses you take at each university due to ASHA requirements, but will probably have different clinical experiences at each university based on the availability of on-campus and off-campus placements. Some factors to consider when deciding which school to attend include location, the availability of opportunities in your area(s) of interest, cost, and/or scholarship or graduate assistantship opportunities.

When should I take the GRE?

You should take the GRE between late spring and early fall of the year you will be applying to graduate school. To register for the GRE, you should visit https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/centers_dates/?WT.ac=grehome_grecenterdates_180410 and click on "view test centers, dates, and seat availability" for the computer-delivered test. This website will allow you to search for dates/times and locations for the GRE. Once you find the time and location that works best for you, you can then register for the GRE through this website.

Where/how to send GRE scores to graduate programs?

When you take the GRE, you have the option to send your scores to four codes for free. Any additional codes are $27 each. To determine which codes to use, you should first check the requirements of each school that you are applying to, as some schools require you to submit scores both to CSDCAS and the university. You should be able to find this information on each program's website. Once you know where to send your scores, you should refer to the document

titled "Institutions and Fellowship Sponsors Approved to Receive GRE Scores" at the bottom of this page to determine which codes to enter:
https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/scores/send/.

Should I retake the GRE?

If you're thinking about retaking the GRE for your application to CMU's graduate program, you should know that **average** GRE scores of the students accepted on the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning tests are around 150. For the Analytical Writing test, the average score of those accepted is usually around 4.0. To get specific information about each of the programs you are applying to, you could consider visiting http://www.asha.org/edfind/ to look at the available information on the range of or average GRE scores of the students accepted the previous year. This can help you determine whether or not your score will be competitive at each university. You can also contact the individual schools to find out score information and what range of scores is competitive at each university.

When deciding whether or not to retake the GRE, it is important to keep in mind that the GRE is designed so that you will get approximately the same score each time you take it unless there is a big difference from the first time to second time you took the exam. For example, if you were sick, anxious, or extremely tired during your first time taking the GRE, you might expect a higher score the second time around. However, if none of these factors played a role in your first score, it is unlikely that you will see a big change in your score without a lot of extra preparation. Remember that retaking the GRE takes time and costs money; deciding whether or not to retake the GRE is a very individualized process and you have to make this decision on your own.

Does CMU interview CMU students?

CMU's Speech-Language Pathology Division is constantly working to improve their admissions process. Therefore, there have been years that we have interviewed CMU students and years that we haven't. Regardless of whether or not we will conduct interviews of CMU students when you apply to the graduate program, we believe that we are truly interviewing our own students every time we interact with them throughout their undergraduate (or post-BA) program. Our interactions with you during your time at CMU are able to give us a more complete picture of who you are than a single interview. Your actions in and out of class will be evaluated by the professors and clinic staff during your time at CMU. The major etiquette video (follow link below) provides detail about type of behavior expected of CSD students that will be considered if you apply to graduate school here.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osfXbeB42Xo&feature=youtu.be

What should I include in my personal statement?

At CMU, we encourage students to include information in their personal statements that is not discussed elsewhere in their application. The personal statement is your opportunity to showcase the talents and strengths that set you apart from other applicants.

When determining how to compose a personal statement for each university you are applying to, it is important to determine the prompt each program is using. CSDCAS provides a general "prompt" for students to use when completing their personal statement. However, certain programs may not use the prompt provided by CSDCAS. You will want be sure you take the time to look through CSDCAS and find the specific prompt for each of the universities to which you are applying.

How should I approach writing my personal statement?

Writing the personal statement is an individualized process. Each student approaches writing in a different way and you will need to figure out what best suits your needs. However, here are some options that might work well for you:
- Use the prompt to brainstorm potential ideas. Pick a topic that you can expand on and provide adequate detail to represent yourself in a professional manner.
- Consider including information specific to each program that you are applying to, such as faculty members that you would like to conduct research with or certain features of the program that interest you.
- Spend time typing up all of the ideas that come to mind. You can go back later to add, remove, or re-organize your ideas to complete your personal statement.
- Create an outline, map, or web of topics that you might want to address in your personal statement.
- Ask several individuals to review your personal statement after you finish a draft. A parent, friend, roommate, professor, clinical supervisor, or individual from the writing center can be helpful in identifying possible areas of improvement.

Be sure to keep in mind the topic and word/character limit requirements from each university as you are working on your personal statement.

What can I be doing now to improve my application to graduate school?

Some of the factors considered by SLP programs when making admissions decisions for graduate school include overall GPA, CSD GPA, letters of recommendation, interviews, and/or GRE scores. You can start addressing some of these factors now by doing the following:

- Overall/CSD GPA: Making sure you stay on top of your classes can help you maintain competitive overall and CSD GPAs.
- Letters of Recommendation: Building relationships with individuals who could write you letters of recommendation is also something you can start working on now. This might include making sure you participate in class, send appropriate emails to professors, conduct or assist with research projects, and participate in student organizations. Your letter writers will consider their own experiences with you as well as any other experiences you share with them on your résumé, so any of your work, volunteer, and extracurricular activities can help you get strong letters of recommendation.
- Interviews: Review common interview questions and conduct mock interviews with friends and family. You could even sign up for a mock interview through Career Services (https://www.cmich.edu/ess/academic_advising_assistance/career_services/Pages/MockInterview.aspx).
- GRE Scores: Take a practice GRE test. Based on your performance, consider taking a GRE prep course or purchasing and GRE prep book.

What factors are considered when admitting students to graduate school?

At CMU, we consider your full CSDCAS application (i.e., overall GPA [calculated as last 60 credit hours], CSD GPA, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, personal statement, entered activities/involvements, etc.) and interviews. For CMU students, there may not always be official interviews, as we consider all of our interactions with you during your time at CMU to be a major part of your interview process. We do always hold group interviews for non-CMU students.

How do I know if a school requires anything in addition to the CSDCAS application?

Many schools that use CSDCAS and also have other requirements that you must complete outside of CSDCAS discuss those requirements on CSDCAS in the "Program Materials" section. However, you could also check each school's website and/or contact each program via phone or email to inquire about application requirements.

How, when, and where should I send transcripts?

When applying to graduate school, you will need to submit transcripts from every college or university you have attended. Information about how to request copies of your CMU transcript is available at the following website:
https://www.cmich.edu/ess/registrar/RegistrarRecords/Pages/Transcript_Request.aspx.

Some programs will require that transcripts be sent directly to the CSD departments *IN ADDITION* to CSDCAS. You will want to be sure to check with the programs you are applying to for specific requirements. All transcripts should be sent directly to CSDCAS. Your application will not be processed without them. Note the following requirements:

- TRANSCRIPTS MUST BE ORIGINAL.
- TRANSCRIPTS MUST BE ADDRESSED TO CSDCAS.
- TRANSCRIPTS MUST BE MAILED BY YOUR REGISTRAR, NOT YOU. No exceptions.
- ELECTRONIC TRANSCRIPTS ARE ONLY ACCEPTED FROM CREDENTIAL SOLUTIONS, PARCHMENT, AND NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE (used by CMU). This is not the same as an emailed transcript, which would not be accepted.

It is recommended that transcript requests are made AT LEAST 10-12 weeks prior to the application deadline. This includes requests to both individual colleges and CSDCAS. For additional information please visit: https://portal.csdcas.org/csdcasHelpPages/instructions-and-faq/transcripts/sending-u-s-canadian-transcripts/index.html

If I studied abroad through CMU, do I need to submit transcripts from the foreign institution I attended?

No - if your study abroad program was through CMU and your courses and grades show up on your CMU transcript, you do not need to request transcripts from the foreign institution you attended.

What courses should I list as fulfilling prerequisite requirements for the graduate programs to which I am applying?

If a school requires you to indicate which courses you've taken to fulfill the ASHA certification requirements related to biological sciences, physical sciences, statistics, and the social/behavioral sciences, the following website will be helpful in determining which courses to list in each area: **https://www.asha.org/Certification/Course-Content-Areas-for-SLP-Standards/**

If a school requires you to specify which CSD courses you've taken to fulfill prerequisite requirements for their program, you might find the tables provided at the end of this document helpful.

How do I begin a CSDCAS application?

Please reference the following link to begin preparing for the online application process, where you'll have the opportunity to either start your application, visit the FAQ page, or view a demo Webinar: https://csdcas.liaisoncas.org/csdcas-students/

When should I submit my application through CSDCAS?

Applications should be submitted prior to the deadline designated by each graduate program. CSDCAS applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis by completion date. CSDCAS cannot expedite individual applications.

- To identify application deadlines, please reference the following webpage and click for the list of participating programs and deadlines in the bottom of the welcome box: https://csdcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login

We encourage you to follow the CSDCAS recommended timeline when completing your application (visit https://help.liaisonedu.com/CSDCAS_Applicant_Help_Center and click on "Quick Start Guide").

*FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HELP ANSWERING ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE, PLEASE VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE: https://help.liaisonedu.com/CSDCAS_Applicant_Help_Center

If I am reapplying to programs, will I have to re-enter all of my information into CSDCAS?

No – CSDCAS will allow you to reuse some of the information that you previously entered when reapplying to programs. However, there will be some information that you will need to enter again.

If I am reapplying to programs, can I use all of the same materials?

When reapplying, it is recommended that you update all of your materials to ensure they include all of the experiences you've had since your last application. Although you should use your original materials as a starting point, it is highly recommended that you improve them by providing information about why you're a stronger applicant this time than the time before. If you submit the same materials again, you are unlikely to experience a different result.

If I am reapplying to programs, what can I do to improve my application from my first attempt?

There are many different ways to improve your application from your first attempt, including:

- Discussing experiences that you've had since your last application that make you a stronger applicant
- Adding any courses you've taken or retaken since your last attempt to improve your GPA

- Making sure you get updated letters of recommendation that include any updates from your last application – you could get letters from the same people or ask for letters from new people (especially if you've had a job or other experience in the past year that a new letter writer could discuss)
- Carefully proofreading your personal statement to ensure it is well-written and doesn't contain any spelling, grammatical, punctuation, or capitalization errors
- Possibly retake the GRE

How do my CMU CSD courses align with the prerequisite courses for other SLP graduate programs?

Wayne State University Courses	CMU Equivalent
SLP 5300, Introduction to SLP	CSD 230
SLP 5320, Normal Language Acquisition	CSD 330
SLP 5080, Phonetics	CSD 278
SLP 5090, Anatomy and Physiology of the Speech Mechanism	CSD 335
SLP 5310, Clinical Methods	CSD 439
SLP 6460, Language and Phonological Disorders	CSD 338/340
SLP 6480, Organic Disorders	CSD 417
SLP 5120, Speech Science	CSD 463
SLP 5360, Clinical Practice in SLP	CSD 494/495
AUD 5400, Introduction to Audiology	CSD 331
SLP 5420, Aural Rehabilitation	CSD 431
Elective Major Courses	CSD 551/525

Western Michigan University Courses	CMU Equivalent
SPPA 2030 Normal Language Acquisition	CSD 330
SPPA 2040 Phonetics	CSD 278
SPPA 2041 Phonetics Lab	CSD 278
SPPA 2070 Clinic Laboratory (includes 25 hours of clinic observation)	CSD 494
SPPA 3580 Disorders of Hearing: ID & Mgmt.	CSD 331
SPPA 2050 Speech Anatomy & Physiology	CSD 335
SPPA 2060 Hearing Science	CSD 463/331
SPPA 3510 Phonemic Disorders	CSD 338
SPPA 3540 Language Disorders in Children	CSD 340
SPPA 4560 Rehabilitation Audiology	CSD 431

Eastern Michigan University Courses	CMU Equivalent
SPSI 332 Acoustic Phonetics Speech Science	CSD 463
SPSI 334 Applied Phonetics	CSD 278
SPSI 335 Introduction to Communication Disorders	CSD 230
SPSI 336 Physiologic Phonetics: Anatomy and Physiology	CSD 335
SPSI 337 Language Acquisition	CSD 330
SPSI 340 Phonological and Articulation Disorders	CSD 338
SPSI 342 Language Disorders in Children	CSD 340
SPSI 347 Normal Aging and Health Issues in SLP	CSD 417
SPHI 392 Introduction to Audiology	CSD 331

Grand Valley State University Requirements	CMU Equivalent
Anatomy and Physiology	CSD 335
Language Development	CSD 330
Phonetics	CSD 278
Hearing Science	CSD 331/431/463
Speech Science	CSD 463
Basic Audiology	CSD 331
Neurological Foundations of Communication Disorders	CSD 417
Aural Rehabilitation	CSD 431
Two courses in a disorders area	CSD 338/340/417/551

Michigan State University Courses	CMU Equivalent
CSD 213 Anatomy/Physiology of Speech and Hearing Mechanisms	CSD 335
CSD 232 Descriptive Phonetics	CSD 278
CSD 303 Fundamentals of Hearing	CSD 331
CSD 313 Speech Science	CSD 463
CSD 333 Oral Language Development	CSD 330
CSD 364 Speech/Language Disorders and Their Evaluations	CSD 439/338/340/417
CSD 444 Audiologic Assessment and Rehabilitation	CSD 431
CSD 463 Intervention/Rehabilitation Procedures in SLP	CSD 439
CSD 203 Introduction to Communicative Sciences and Disorders	CSD 230
CSD 391 Clinical Observation	CSD 494

Calvin College Courses	CMU Equivalent
SPAUD 101 - Introduction to Speech Pathology and Audiology	CSD 230
SPAUD 210 - Anatomy/Physiology of Speech, Hearing, & Language Mechanisms	CSD 335
SPAUD 216 - Phonetics	CSD 278
SPAUD 217 - Speech Science	CSD 463
SPAUD 218 - Hearing Science	CSD 331/463
SPAUD 311 - Child Language Development	CSD 330
SPAUD 343 - Principles of Communication Neuroscience	CSD 417
SPAUD 344 - Audiology	CSD 331
SPAUD 345 - Aural Rehabilitation	CSD 431
SPAUD 370 - Introduction to Clinical Practicum: Observation	CSD 494
SPAUD 384 - Speech Sound Disorders across the Lifespan	CSD 338
SPAUD 385 - Language Disorders across the Lifespan	CSD 340/417

Andrews College Courses	CMU Equivalent
SPPA 234 Intro to SLP & AUD	CSD 230
SPPA 321 Normal Language Development	CSD 330
SPPA 331 Basic Audiology	CSD 331
SPPA 285 Applied Phonetics	CSD 278
SPPA 280 Anatomy & Physiology	CSD 335
SPPA 374 Articulation & Phonology	CSD 338
SPPA 310 Speech Science	CSD 463
SPPA 340 Neuroscience of Communication	CSD 417
SPPA 332 Audiological Procedures	CSD 431