

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Language Pathology
5	Programme Code	5104F
6	Programme Accreditation	This programme leads to the award of a degree which is accepted as a professional qualification by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Graduates of the programme are entitled to apply for registration as Speech and Language Therapists with the Health and Care Professions Council.
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Health Care Programmes
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Date written/revised	May 2024

10 Programme Aims

1. To provide students with academic and clinical knowledge and skills that meets the approval criteria of the Health and Care Professions Council for registration of graduates for employment as Speech and Language Therapists and the Curriculum Guidance for pre-registration education of Speech and Language Therapists as set out by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.
2. To foster a synergy between research and teaching.
3. To ensure that teaching provision meets the changing need of employers.
4. To develop and improve students' ability to work both independently and in teams; to use initiative and solve problems; and to prioritise work and meet deadlines.
5. To provide a programme which meets the requirements of the FHEQ for a level 7 award.
6. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

For students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skills which reflect the QAA benchmarks for speech and language therapy and the Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for Speech and Language Therapists.

Knowledge and Understanding

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate:

A Knowledge and Understanding (see section C in Health Care/Speech and Language Therapy Benchmark Statement).

A1 An in-depth understanding of current knowledge of the causes, symptomatology and consequences of the range of human communication disorders and the clinical skills necessary for effective intervention practice. This includes accurate use and spelling of specific terminology.

A2 Research abilities that will allow graduates to build the knowledge base of a relatively recent discipline and to meet employers' need for graduates able to validly evaluate clinical service provision.

A3 The conceptual tools to enable them to effectively adapt to advances in theory and developments in clinical practice throughout their working lives. These include relevant knowledge from the disciplines of linguistics, psychology, biological sciences, education and social theory, and the ability to apply this knowledge effectively.

A4 The knowledge and skills to act as advocates for their profession and the population they will serve as speech and language therapists.

A5 Awareness of legislations, statutory codes and policy affecting speech and language therapy practice across health, social care and education contexts.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Knowledge base and clinical goals (A1) are set for both years of the programme. The first year comprises a number of foundation as well as speech and language pathology modules. These employ lectures, practical classes, and case-based problem-solving (CBPS) exercises. In the second year, more complex problems are set in speech and language pathology. Students complete a practical dysphagia module that enables demonstration of RCSLT pre-registration eating, drinking and swallowing competencies. Clinical practice placements initially take place on the university site (campus clinics) and introduce use of the problem-solving framework (in line with speech & language pathology modules). At later stages, placements become more varied in-service delivery and the populations served. Blocks of clinical experience in both summers help to prepare students for the workplace and to develop the full-range of skills required to register for a licence to practise. Research skills (A2) taught are specific to speech and language therapy, with an emphasis on clinical effectiveness.

The programme will prepare students to respond to the rapidly changes in the knowledge base and policy of service delivery that affect the profession (A3). The preparation is delivered through CBPS exercises, experiential exercises, reflective practice and critical appraisal. All these aspects are specified in assessment and marking criteria which are made explicit for students in all areas of assessment in advance.

Knowledge of the professional context (A4-5) in which Speech and Language Therapists work, current issues, and relevant legislation and requirements are promoted through team working, peer assessment, interprofessional learning workshops, service user involvement, as well as more traditional methods such as tutorials, small group teaching and peer learning.

Assessment Strategy

Foundation knowledge (A1, A3) is assessed through essays, exercises and reports. Practical skills (e.g., phonetics) are examined by practical examination, as well as group reports and verbal presentations on researched topics. CBPS teaching is assessed by written case management plans and other assignments, students' clinical competencies are measured through clinical evaluation reports, unseen clinical viva voce examinations, written case reports, observation of videotaped sessions, an 'unseen' video exam and input from practice educators on performance throughout the placement.

Written examinations assess statistical concepts and data analysis abilities (A2) in year 2. Research abilities are further assessed by an 'Extended Case Report' which is an independent empirical project of clinical effectiveness or related research.

Where relevant, professional aspects are assessed (A4-5) in reflective learning logs, practical exams, clinical case reports and 'unseen' clinical vivas.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

B Intellectual Skills (see sections A & B in Health Care/Speech and Language Therapy Benchmark Statement).

B1 Ability to make appropriate case management decisions for developmental and acquired disorders of communication and clients with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties, justifying those decisions theoretically.

B2 Clinical competence to provide intervention for developmental and acquired disorders of communication and eating, drinking and swallowing using evidence-based practice.

B3 Ability to objectively and routinely evaluate clinical effectiveness.

B4 The ability to critically evaluate service provision policy.

B5 The ability to evaluate new research and techniques that become available, and apply these appropriately in working practice.

B6 Develop effective interpersonal skills and be able to reflect on their own interpersonal communication and its effect on colleagues from all disciplines as well as service users and their families. Demonstrate the ability to form and maintain egalitarian relationships with colleagues and service users as the bedrock for clinical work.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Core speech and language pathology subjects (B1) are presented using a CBPS approach. Students plan case management in classroom exercises and are required to use the same format in their clinical practice placements, enhancing the links between theory and clinical practice. This is reinforced via an e-learning resource, NU Reflect.

All case management decisions (B2), including choice of intervention approach, must be justified with reference to relevant theoretical and clinical literature as well as clinical reasoning in both classroom exercises and clinical practice placements.

Research skills (B3, B5), including evaluation, are taught throughout the programme. Students are required to evaluate clinical effectiveness in every case they treat, to ensure they have the research skills necessary for clinical practice (e.g., for quality assurance).

Each case management plan requires justified decisions concerning service delivery (B4). A mixture of workshops and self-directed learning develops students' ability to deal with professional issues.

Students practise and are given feedback on appropriate interpersonal skills for each of their clinical placements (B6). Interprofessional learning and working are integrated into all clinical practice placement learning through the Intended Learning Outcomes/clinical competencies.

Assessment Strategy

Students are required to complete 6 case management plans as major pieces of assessed work over in years 1 and 2 of the programme, as well as an extended case in year 2 on a client where management decisions have to be justified in detail.

All student clinical placements are assessed by the clinical educator, who indicates whether students have mastered specific competencies set for each year of the programme. Students receive detailed information about their areas of strength/progress as well as areas for future development.

Clinical placements are also assessed through *viva voce* examination and written examination of 'unseen' cases. The 'Extended Case Report', completed during year 2, assesses students' ability carry out an evaluation of intervention (and in some cases depending on the nature of the placement and its constraints, assessment that would inform intervention) with a single case, and is presented as a research report.

Knowledge of service delivery issues is assessed in case management plans. Current professional issues are explored in seminars and assessed via a reflective log .

Eating, drinking and swallowing RCSLT competencies are assessed through a written exam (knowledge-based) and a practical exam (skills-based).

Interpersonal skills and awareness of interprofessional working are assessed through clinical educator reports (see B2 above) and through case management plans submitted throughout during the two years.

Practical Skills

The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate:

C Cognitive skills (see section C in Health Care Benchmark Statement)

C1 The ability to search for information efficiently and effectively.

C2 The ability to critically evaluate arguments and evidence.

C3 The ability to encapsulate complex theoretical positions, drawing conclusions.

C4 The ability to identify problems and develop strategies for their resolution.

Teaching and Learning Methods

CBPS learning requires students to seek information (C1).

Planning case management (C2 and C3) requires students to weigh evidence, then make decisions that can be explicitly justified. Given the contradictory nature of the literature on many aspects of communication pathology and treatment, students must learn to appraise evidence to draw conclusions.

In the second year of the programme, the problems set become more complex (C4).

Assessment Strategy

All assessed CBPS assignments (C1-3). Also, essays and exams set for modules require seeking and evaluating information.

A number of assessments tap students' ability to identify problems and develop strategies for their resolution (C4).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have:

D Transferable Skills.

D1 Effective communication and interpersonal skills.

D2 IT skills.

D3 The ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines.

D4 The ability to work both independently and in teams.

D5 The ability to use initiative and solve problems.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Communication and interpersonal skills (D1) through verbal presentations, tutorials, and participating in CBPS group learning; clinical placements.

Students receive information via Canvas, seek information through the internet and on-line journal facilities, and use phonetic and language analysis equipment to develop IT skills (D2).

The CBPS part of the programme encourages self-directed learning, student groups negotiate individual research tasks, integrate information, and discuss findings (D3, D4). Students work together to provide intensive treatment to individual clients and to deliver group treatment in their campus clinic placement in the Aphasia Centre. . Peer placements are common in the children's campus clinic and during external placements.

CBPS exercises and clinical and professional education promote initiative taking and problem solving (D5).

Assessment Strategy

Skills are assessed through presentations and clinical practice (D1); written assignments, bibliographies, clinical equipment, use of digital media in verbal presentations, phonetics assessment (D2).

Penalties are in place for assessments that are submitted late and also if service user confidentiality is breached (D3). This penalty applies to both written and verbal assessments. Students are required to be well prepared for clinical sessions when on placement and write reports and/or produce other materials at the required time.

Students work in small groups to collect and analyse data to build a holistic profile of a service user with complex needs, in collaboration with local services (D4). Both CBPS and clinical practicum are assessed throughout the programme (D5).

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

This programme is available in full-time mode only for the duration of 24 months. The programme comprises 180 credits of compulsory modules per year (360 credits in total). Progression from year 1 to year 2 requires completion and assessment of clinical practice placements. If a student fails a clinical placement in year 1, the decision about progression to year 2 is made on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Clinical Education and the Degree Programme Director with regard to the policy on failing clinical modules.

All students are required to participate in clinical practicum, some of which occurs during traditional vacations. A student who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first attempt in one or more components of the clinical and professional education modules, shall not be permitted to undertake any further clinical practice subjects, unless given permission to do so by the Degree Programme Director and Director of Clinical Education. Such students may take, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director, alternative modules and will be eligible to be awarded an MSc in Language and Communication. This degree will not enable them to practise as Speech and Language Therapists.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Clinical Practice

Overview of MSc clinical practice placements and clinical assessments

The learning outcomes are shown in Appendix A (MOFS).

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[5104 Programme Regulations 24-25](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports
n/a

Additional mechanisms
n/a

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.