

**University of Houston**

**Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders  
(UH COMD)**

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program  
Student Handbook**

**2022-2023**

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
Department Chair: Margaret (Peggy) Blake  
PhD Program Director: Ashwini Joshi

**Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION .....	3
About the Program .....	3
Mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders .....	4
ADMISSION .....	5
Required Materials .....	5
Documentation of Previous Education .....	6
Curriculum Vitae or Resume .....	6
Statement of Interest .....	6
Applicant Interview .....	6
International Applicants .....	6
Application Fees .....	7
Non-Discrimination Statement .....	7
CURRICULUM .....	8
Program Description .....	8
Curriculum Planning and Dissertation Committees .....	8
Curriculum Planning Committee .....	8
Dissertation Committee .....	9
Full-Time versus Part-Time Enrollment .....	9
Transfer Credits .....	9
Time Limits and 99-Hour Doctoral Cap .....	9
Coursework and Credits .....	10
Research Activity Requirements .....	13
Initial Research Project .....	13
Comprehensive Examination .....	13
Doctoral Candidacy and Prospectus .....	14
Doctoral Dissertation .....	14
Other Research and Professional Development Opportunities .....	15
Additional Program Requirements .....	15
Teaching Experience .....	15
Progress Evaluations .....	15
Dismissal from Program .....	16
Petitioning for Reinstatement .....	17
Problem Resolution and Grievances .....	17
FUNDING .....	19
POLICY WAIVERS .....	20
APPENDICES .....	21
I. Sample Curriculum in Communication Sciences and Disorders .....	22
II. Grievance Policy of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders .....	23
III. Curriculum Planning Committee Form .....	28
IV. Curriculum Planning Committee Change Form .....	29

V. Initial Research Project Defense Form .....	30
VI. Comprehensive Examination Defense Form .....	31
VII. Dissertation Committee Formation Form .....	32
VIII. Dissertation Prospectus Form .....	33
IX. Links to Graduate School Forms and Procedures .....	34

## INTRODUCTON

This handbook serves as a guide for students of the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders. It outlines current academic policies and procedures as well as the requirements of the program. The University of Houston and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences have minimum requirements for all graduate students, but these requirements may be superseded by the more specific departmental requirements and/or program requirements. The program requirements are in line with institutional requirements except where more specific departmental rules apply that may supersede more general guidelines.

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders. The Program Director, the student's mentor, and the Program Manager are available to assist and guide the students, but it is the student's responsibility to follow the policies and procedures of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (UH COMD), the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and the University of Houston.

Under unique and/or extenuating circumstances, written permission may be requested from the PhD Committee, Program Director, and Department Chair to waive or revise departmental requirements. Decisions on such requests are made on an individual basis and must be approved at the Departmental, College, and University level.

### About the Program

The primary educational objective of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in COMD is to prepare students for academic careers in the field of speech-language pathology/communication disorders by providing the highest quality instruction and research experience. Graduates of this program will comprise the next generation of leading researchers and scholars in the field of communication sciences and disorders.

This program is mentor-based with the student and mentor designing a program of study that meets the student's goals within the general guidelines of the program as outlined in this handbook (e.g., number of credits, first-year project).

Applicants must first identify an area of study and the potential professor(s) with whom they share common scientific interests, given the broad range of research areas by our faculty (e.g., aphasia, augmentative communication, autism spectrum disorder, bilingualism, dysphagia, and disorders of phonology, cognition, fluency and fluency disorders, literacy, voice). A UH COMD faculty member must accept the responsibility of being the student's primary mentor before the applicant is considered for admission to

the PhD program. Acceptance of a student into the COMD PhD program is determined on an individual basis by factors including but not limited to previous grade point average(s) (GPA), letters of recommendation, and identification of an area of study and an agreement by a COMD faculty member to provide mentoring. The PhD program in COMD constitutes a combination of formal coursework within UH COMD and in related departments, an independent initial research project, a qualifying research experience, and a final aggregation of scholarly work.

### **Mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The mission of the UH COMD Program is to advance the understanding of typical and disordered speech, language, swallowing, and hearing through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service to the community.

## ADMISSION

Admittance of a student into the COMD PhD program is determined on an individual basis and based on several factors. Students must meet or exceed the minimum acceptance requirements of the University of Houston Graduate School. The documentation required to be considered for admission is detailed below. All application materials must be submitted by the application deadline, which is posted on the UH COMD website (<https://www.uh.edu/class/COMD/programs/phd/>). Please visit: <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/admissions/how-to-apply/> for more information on how to apply. Students may be admitted into the PhD program with or without funding.

### Requirements

To be given full consideration for admission to the COMD PhD Program, all application materials must be completed and received by the deadline posted on the Program website (<https://www.uh.edu/class/COMD/programs/phd/>). Prospective students must complete the application on CollegeNet, have an interview with the prospective mentor, and obtain a tentative agreement by a COMD faculty member to provide the applicant's initial mentoring before the application deadline. The following are required to apply:

- Applicant interview with prospective mentor and commitment from the mentor
- Documentation of previous education (transcripts)
- Three (3) letters of recommendation
- Curriculum vitae or resume
- Statement of interest
- Materials required of international applicants (if applicable)
- Application fees

### *Applicant Interview*

As part of the application process, applicants must complete an interview with a potential mentor either in person or online before the application deadline. A tentative agreement by a COMD faculty member to provide the applicant's initial mentoring is required for acceptance into the program as part of the application process before the application deadline. This interview will be used to determine the candidate's readiness and preparation for doctoral studies, suitability of their academic and research goals for this program, as well as the likelihood that the applicant will be successful in achieving their academic, research, and career goals.

### ***Documentation of Previous Education***

Prospective students must submit official transcripts from each college or university previously attended, including the degree(s) earned and date(s) awarded. Students must meet or exceed the minimum acceptance requirements of the [University of Houston Graduate School](#). UH requires that doctoral applicants have earned at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States (US) or at an institution at which English is the medium of instruction in the following countries: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Jamaica, Liberia, Trinidad and Tobago, the Virgin Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Grenada, Turks and Caicos, and English-speaking Canadian provinces. Please see the section on "[International Applicants](#)" to see the requirements for applicants with degrees from institutions in other regions of the world.

### ***Curriculum Vitae or Resume***

An academic curriculum vitae or a resume illustrating the applicant's relevant background and experience should be included with the application.

### ***Statement of Interest***

A personal statement of interest explaining why you are applying to our program must be included with the application. While there is not one specific way to compose such a statement, the typical document includes information about why the applicant is a good fit for our program, her/his research interests, career objectives and plans, and it typically identifies the proposed mentor. The personal statement of interest should not exceed 2 pages (double-spaced).

### ***International Applicants***

Applicants with degrees from institutions in other regions of the world must present *one* of the following scores for the *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL): (a) a score of 79 or higher on the Internet based version (iBT), with a minimum writing score of 20; (b) a minimum score of 20 in Reading, 20 in Listening, and

20 in Writing on the new revised paper-based exam. Alternatively, a student may present a score of 6.5 on the *International English Language Testing System* (IELTS), with a minimum writing score of 6.5. In addition to the above, international applicants must also submit each of the following: a Statement of Understanding, a letter of financial backing, a non-refundable application evaluation fee, and the language tests specified above. More information for international students can be found on this page of the Graduate School's web site: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/international-students/>.

### ***Application Fees***

A \$50.00 nonrefundable departmental processing fee is charged to domestic applicants. An \$80 nonrefundable departmental fee is charged to international applicants. The fees are non-refundable.

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

The policy of the University of Houston is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, veteran's status, genetic information, or sex (including pregnancy), except where such a distinction is required by law. Additionally, UH prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment and educational programs on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Employees, students, and visitors to campus with questions and/or complaints regarding discrimination, or sexual misconduct (such as sexual violence) under Title IX may contact Dr. Toni Sanchez Benoit, Interim Title IX Coordinator and Assistant VC/VP for Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Dr. Sanchez Benoit serves as the Interim Title IX Coordinator as well as the ADA and Section 504 Coordinator for UH and can be contacted at:

Toni Sanchez Benoit, J.D.4367 Wheeler St Houston, TX 77204  
eos@uh.edu  
713.743.8835



## CURRICULUM

### Program Description

The curriculum of the doctoral program is designed to provide students with the necessary foundational courses and research experiences to support a productive academic career. Students will work with advisors to select members for two committees as they matriculate through the doctoral program: curriculum planning committee and dissertation committee. Members of these committees may remain the same throughout the program or may be adjusted as the student progresses. Changes to any of the student's committees must be approved by the Committee Chair, the Program Director, the Department Chair. Every student will have a curriculum uniquely designed by members of the Curriculum Planning Committee. This individual program of study is intended to ensure academic rigor, quality instruction, and future marketability of program graduates. Students must complete all required course work, research experiences and additional program requirements. [Appendix I](#) presents an outline for the completion of all requirements in a 4-year period.

### Curriculum Planning and Dissertation Committees

#### *Curriculum Planning Committee*

This committee is formed at the beginning of the student's program (no later than the beginning of registration for the following Spring semester; typically, mid-October) and is led by the student's primary mentor to guide the student at least through the Comprehensive Examination of their program. The committee must contain at least three members led by the primary mentor who will also serve as the committee chair and who must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in UH COMD. The second committee member must also be from UH COMD. The third committee member may be from UH COMD, another department at the University of Houston, or an outside expert with sufficient expertise and credentials to help guide the student through the program.

The student and Curriculum Planning Committee will meet before the beginning of the Spring semester of the student's first year in the program to discuss the student's progress towards the Initial Research Project, outline a plan for successful completion of the Initial Research Project, and discuss the student's program of study.

Committee membership – including establishing a new committee and changes to an existing committee – must be approved as stipulated above under Program Description.

### ***Dissertation Committee***

The student's dissertation committee is formed after the successful passing of the Comprehensive Examination (both the written and oral portions) to help lead the student through candidacy, dissertation, and the successful completion of the program. The Dissertation Committee must be comprised of a minimum of four members, including three faculty members from UH COMD and one approved member external to the department, who is acceptable to the department and the college. After these minimum requirements for committee members are satisfied, additional committee members may be approved. Members of the Curriculum Planning Committee may also serve on the Dissertation Committee.

### **Full-Time versus Part-Time Enrollment**

Students have the option of full-time or part-time enrollment in the UH COMD PhD program. Full-time enrollment comprises 9 credit hours per semester; part-time enrollment comprises up to 6 credit hours per semester. The curriculum plan for students choosing part-time enrollment must still be completed within the 10-year time frame as stipulated by the University of Houston (see also Time Limits and 99-Hour Doctoral Cap below). Some types of funding may not be available to part-time students.

### **Transfer Credits**

In accordance with UH policies, up to 9 credits of graduate coursework may be transferred from other accredited institutions and counted towards the minimum hours required to complete the program, subject to the approval of the student's primary mentor, PhD Program Director, Department Chair, Associate/Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies, and the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate and Professional Student Petition is accessible via the Graduate School's website (<https://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/gpsp-updated-petition-102020.pdf>.)

### **Time Limits and 99-Hour Doctoral Cap**

Students who enroll as doctoral candidates must complete their degree requirements within 10 years of the date of first enrollment with a doctoral degree objective. Failure to comply will result in the candidate being ineligible for that doctoral degree.

Doctoral students who fail to complete their dissertation within five years after completion of the comprehensive examination must retake the examination. For more information on the time limits, please consult the [current UH Graduate Catalog](#).

The State of Texas subsidizes a large portion of the costs of doctoral education at its public universities, and the State Legislature has decided to limit the length of time the state will continue this subsidy for individual students. All doctoral students who accumulate more than ninety-nine doctoral semester credit hours at any Texas public institution of higher education will be charged the non-resident tuition rates irrespective of student residency status or any appointment, fellowship, or other circumstance that would normally entitle them to resident tuition rates. Please see the graduate catalog entry on the [99-Hour Doctoral Cap](#) for full details.

## **Coursework and Credits**

Coursework in the COMD PhD program requires a minimum of 54 credit hours of graduate coursework beyond a master's degree. These 54 credit hours will be obtained by completing coursework and credit in the following areas: Advanced Statistics (9 credit hours), COMD Advanced Research Methods (3 credit hours), Special Problems or Selected Topics in COMD (9 credit hours), Grant Writing (3 credit hours), Teaching Methods (3 credit hours), electives outside the major (6 credit hours), COMD Proseminar (3 credit hours), Research (6 credit hours), and Dissertation (12 credit hours), as outlined in Table 1. Potential elective courses are listed in Table 2. Elective courses must be approved by the student's Curriculum Planning Committee prior to enrolling in them.

For students applying to the PhD program with a bachelor's degree but without a master's degree, completion of an additional 30 credit hours at the graduate level in COMD and related fields will be expected as part of the PhD curriculum plan for a minimum of 84 total credit hours. Thirty hours of graduate courses may be elective courses listed in Table 2. As part of the program of study, students will be required to complete all the coursework listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Semester Credit Hour (SCH) Requirements by Category**

<b>Category</b>	<b>SCH Entering with a Bachelor's</b>	<b>SCH Entering with a Master's</b>
Advanced Statistics	9	9
COMD Advanced Research Methods	3	3
Grant Writing	3	3
Teaching Methods	3	3
COMD Proseminar	3	3
Special Problems or Selected Topics in COMD	9	9
Electives Outside the Major	6	6
COMD Research	6	6
Dissertation	12	12
Graduate level credits	30	0
Other (e.g., internships, clinical work, residencies)	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>54</b>

**Table 2. List of Potential Electives\* and Courses to Fulfill Program Requirements (SCH= Semester Credit Hours)**

<b>Prefix and Number</b>	<b>Elective Course* Title</b>	<b>SCH</b>
COMM 6335	Health Communication Theory & Research	3
COMM 6336	Communications in Healthcare Contexts	3
COMM 6339	Multicultural Health Communication	3
COMM 6345	Health Campaigns	3
CUIN 7370	Teacher as Researcher	3
CUIN 8319	Advanced Doctoral Seminar: Entering the Profession	3
CUIN 7315	Models Multilingual Ed	3
EDUC 6302	Context of Teaching	3
EDRS 8381	Research Methods in Education	3
EDRS 8382	Statistical Analyses in Education	3
PEP 8306	Principles of Scientific Inquiry	3
PEP 8334	Applied Statistical Modeling in Health Research	3
PHCA 7308	Biostatistics and Experimental Design	3
PHCA 8302	Adv. Res. Methods in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy	3
PHCA 8303	Multivariate Analysis in Pharmaceutical Health Outcomes and Policy	3
PHIL 6354	Medical Ethics	3
PHIL 6358	Classics in the History of Ethics	3
PHLS 8302	Research Methods in Psy/Educ Research	3
PHLS 8319	Inferential Statistics in Psy/Educ Research	3
PHLS 8322	Intermediate Statistical Analysis in Psy/Educ Research	3
PHLS 8326	Nonparametric Stats in Ed Research	3
PHLS 8327	Longitudinal Data Analysis Psy/Educ Research	3
PHLS 8328	Hierarchical Linear Modeling in Psych/Educ Research	3
PSYC 6300	Stats for Psychology	3
PSYC 6302	Experimental Design	3
PSYC 6304	Social Development	3
PSYC 6391	Seminar in Teaching of Psychology	3
PSYC 7306	Advanced Statistics: Multilevel Modeling	3
PSYC 7333	Experimental Neuropsychology	3
PSYC 7334	Dementia	3
PSYC 8322	Psychometrics	3
PSYC 8330	Cognitive Neuroscience	3
SOC 6304	Social Statistics	3

\*Elective courses must be approved by the student's Curriculum Planning Committee and may need instructor approval. Not all courses are offered each semester or every year.

## **Research Activity Requirements**

Successful completion of the following research activities is required as part of the COMD PhD program:

- Initial Research Project
- Comprehensive Examination
- Doctoral Candidacy and Prospectus
- Doctoral Dissertation

### ***Initial Research Project***

Students will complete an Initial Research Project under the direction of their primary mentor. For this initial research project, students will pose a novel research question, analyze data, and interpret findings. This initial research project shall consist of a research project that is developed either from previously collected research data (i.e., no data collection required) or from pilot data collected by the student. Students will produce (1) a complete manuscript and (2) an oral presentation to be defended before their Curriculum Planning Committee. The Curriculum Planning Committee will assign one of the following: pass, pass with revision, or fail. Decisions of fail will result in the student's dismissal from the program.

The project, including the oral defense and the final draft with revisions, must be completed by the official close of the Fall semester of Year 2 of the program.

### ***Comprehensive Examination***

Nearing the completion of the coursework (typically after 4 full semesters or approximately 40 credit hours), students must pass a comprehensive examination. The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to demonstrate proficiency in a body of knowledge base in the chosen area of study.

- The comprehensive examination will take the form of a grant proposal for an external funding opportunity (approved by the Curriculum Planning Committee) and will include (1) a written component and (2) an oral defense.
- Students will enroll in a doctoral level Grant Writing course in their final semester of coursework and begin working on their assigned grant. Students may continue working on their grant during the summer or winter break immediately after completion of the course.
- The student should develop the specific aims of their grant proposal independently and have them approved by the Committee prior to progressing on the grant. The committee may provide feedback as appropriate. .

- The student must independently prepare the rest of the Specific Aims and Research Strategy pages of the grant.
- The deadline for submission of the written component will be decided by the Committee but must be within four months from the end of the Grant Writing course.
- Students will complete an oral defense three weeks after submission of the written component. The content of the oral defense will be determined by the Curriculum Planning Committee. This may include a defense of the submitted grant proposal alone or in addition to specific content-related questions outside of the grant.
- The Curriculum Planning Committee and/or mentor may provide feedback on the grant to the student before submission to the funding agency (e.g., NIH, ASHFoundation). Note that this feedback cannot be provided to the student until after their comprehensive exam has been successfully completed.
- The Curriculum Planning Committee will evaluate the comprehensive exam products (written and oral). The committee will assign one of the following after the completion of the oral defense: pass, pass with revision, or fail.
- A student passing with revision will receive one attempt to revise or redo (1) the written exam, (2) the oral exam, or (3) both components of the exam within 2 months of the first oral defense. The Committee will evaluate this attempt and assign either a pass or fail grade
- Decisions of fail for the initial attempt or after revision will result in dismissal from the program.
- All timelines must be met unless an extension has been approved by the Curriculum Planning Committee and the PhD Program committee for extenuating circumstances.



## ***Doctoral Candidacy and Prospectus***

Prior to being considered a doctoral candidate, students must: 1) have successfully completed the initial research project, 2) passed the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination, and 3) have completed or be nearing completion of their course work (approximately 40 credit hours beyond the master's degree or 70 hours beyond the bachelor's degree) and successfully complete and pass a prospectus of their dissertation. After a student has met these requirements, they will be considered a doctoral candidate and be permitted to begin their dissertation.

The purpose of the prospectus is to ensure that the student's dissertation project is both sound and feasible. The prospectus will include: 1. A written component comprised of a review of the literature, purpose, hypotheses/research questions, and method sections of the dissertation and 2. An oral presentation of the written document. Successful prospectuses will be approved by the dissertation committee.

## ***Doctoral Dissertation***

A student must complete and successfully defend a dissertation based on original research in order to complete the doctoral degree. Full-time students are expected to complete 3 dissertation hours per semester for 4 semesters. All students must enroll in a minimum of 1 hour of dissertation credit for consecutive semesters until the dissertation is completed or until the 10-year time frame for completion is met. If a student has not completed their program within the 10-year university time limit, they will be dismissed from the program. [Please visit the section on Time Limits for more information.](#)

Students should follow the current dissertation/thesis guidelines set forth by the UH Graduate School (<https://uh.edu/graduate-school/academics/thesis/>). Specific formatting may vary by the student's specific area, but any variations must accommodate the general formatting guidelines. The most typical format of a dissertation in Communication Sciences and Disorders follows the structure of a long research report within one's own area of study.

Students can submit a dissertation in one of two formats, in alignment with guidelines from The Graduate School (<https://uh.edu/graduate-school/academics/thesis/uhgs-template-front-matter-082019.docx>):

- With three major sections:
  - Introductory chapters
  - Middle chapters written in journal article format, with each reflecting material sufficient for a published paper/chapter
  - Final chapters integrating the results of all the middle chapters.
- In traditional format:
  - Introductory chapters

- Methods chapter
- Results chapter
- Discussion chapter

### ***Other Research and Professional Development Opportunities***

Students are strongly encouraged to attend scientific lectures and working groups in preparation for academic careers in the field of speech-language pathology/communication disorders. The purpose of this activity is for students to develop practices that will aid in their thinking and writing scientifically. Such activities may include attending invited research talks, presenting at research proseminars, and participating in research reading groups of interest. In their yearly evaluation, the primary mentor may provide an assessment of these activities and offer recommendations for the student.

### **Additional Program Requirements**

#### ***Teaching Experience***

All PhD students must complete a teaching experience. The purpose of the teaching requirement is to prepare students for an academic career that includes classroom instruction. Teaching will give students practice in distilling complex information for a novice learner as opposed to disseminating information to expert learners. Depending on the teaching assignment, a student's teaching mentor may be their PhD mentor or another faculty member with expertise in the subject area or the art/science of teaching and learning. The experience must include being the primary instructor for a course (i.e., not just grading and providing guest lectures). As part of their funding package some students may be assigned as a Clinical Educator (CE). A CE assignment will not be accepted as a substitute for the required classroom teaching experience. UH has a wealth of resources for teaching, including faculty mentorship and other sources listed in [Appendix VIII](#).

#### ***Progress Evaluations***

A satisfactory rate of progress toward completion of degree requirements is expected throughout the student's enrollment, which includes meeting all departmental and institutional standards, satisfactory yearly evaluations and meeting other benchmarks (such as passing the Initial Research Project, Comprehensive Examination, etc.). At or near the end of each spring semester, no later than 5 business days after final grades are due, each student will meet with their primary mentor to discuss the student's yearly and overall progress towards the degree (including grades,

status of on-going or completed projects, etc.) and to plan ahead. Within 7 business days after the meeting with the student, the primary mentor shall prepare a 1- to 2-page written report regarding the particular student's progress towards the degree including an evaluation of the student's progress supported by data (such as courses completed, GPA, status of projects, benchmarks met), an assessment of whether or not the progress has been satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and an assessment of whether or not the student's program is on track as planned.

The mentor's written evaluation will be submitted to the COMD PhD Committee for evaluation within 12 business days after the due date for grades for the regular Spring semester (the student-mentor meeting to occur within 5 business days after grades are due and the mentor's written report is due within 7 business days after the meeting). In addition to the submission of the letter to the COMD PhD Committee, a copy of the mentor's written evaluation will be provided to the student, a copy will be provided to the chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and a copy will be placed in the student's file.

The COMD PhD Committee will meet within 25 business days after the close of the regular Spring semester to discuss the progress of each doctoral student and recommend continuation of the program or dismissal based on the evidence provided by majority vote. Determination of continuation vs. dismissal will be based on whether or not a student meets the UH/Graduate School as well as the COMD PhD minimum criteria as detailed below. Within 5 business days after the COMD PhD Committee meeting, the Program Director will inform the interested parties (the student, the student's mentor, and the chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders) in writing of the recommendations of the COMD PhD Committee. In case of a recommendation of dismissal from the program, the student may petition for reinstatement (see [Petitioning for Reinstatement](#)).

### ***Dismissal from the Program***

The following are conditions in which students may be dismissed from the COMD Ph.D. program:

a. Failure to make the minimum academic requirements for doctoral students at the University of Houston, as described in the Graduate and Professional Studies Catalog (available online at <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-catalog>). Some examples of the University requirement are:

- Students who fail to maintain a minimum graduate grade point average of 3.0 will be put on probation or be suspended from the University; and/or,
- According to University policy, students who receive 4 or more grades of "C" or lower in their programs of study will be terminated from the University. However,

to help ensure the integrity and high standards of the COMD Ph.D. program, the program faculty has adopted a “Two C” rule. Thus, program students who obtain two grades of C will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program, although they may explore other options for continued graduate study within the university.

b. Violation of the ethical principles of speech-language pathologists or researchers in their professional and academic work (e.g., coursework, research).

c. Failure to meet one or more academic requirements (e.g., course work, initial research project, comprehensive exams, prospectus and dissertation,). In these cases, remedial actions will be identified to help the student. If remedial actions fail to correct the deficiencies, the student may be terminated from the Program.

d. Failure to make sufficient progress in one’s program of study. Students who are not making sufficient progress are asked to meet with their advisors to identify remedial steps to assist them. Students who continue to lag behind after remediation may be terminated from the Program.

### ***Petitioning for Reinstatement***

If a student is dismissed from the doctoral program, they have the right to petition the faculty to reverse the decision. A written petition must be submitted to the faculty within three weeks of the initial notice of dismissal. A specific deadline for the petition will be given in the dismissal letter so that a decision may be made prior to the beginning of the subsequent term. The petition should contain the following: the student’s view of what led to their poor performance, a request to be re-admitted to the program, and what changes the student will make to improve performance. The petition will be discussed and voted on by a majority of the tenured/tenure-track COMD faculty. Each petition will be considered individually. Conditions for reinstatement, if approved by the faculty, will also be determined on an individual basis. The student will be informed of the faculty’s decision in a written letter.

### ***Problem Resolution and Grievances***

During the course of one’s education and program, justifiable grievances may arise. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders as well as higher administrative levels at the University of Houston have policies and procedures in place for grievance resolution. The grievance policy of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is in [Appendix II](#).

The academic policies – including grievances – of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Houston can be found here:

<https://uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/>.

The specific grievance procedure of the College can be accessed here:

<https://uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/class-graduate-grievance-policy-procedure-may-2018.pdf>.

The general grievance policy and procedure for graduate and professional students can be accessed here: <http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=11964>.

## FUNDING

Students may be accepted to the PhD program with or without funding. Funded students may receive a stipend (usually in the form of a Graduate Assistantship) and/or a Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF). The GTF covers tuition and course fees for 9 hours of credit per semester. A Graduate Assistant stipend may be provided by a mentor's research grant funds or by the department/college. A Graduate Assistantship requires students to work as a research assistant, teaching assistant, or clinical assistant. Assignments are made by the Department Chair. Please refer to your offer of admission letter for details regarding your specific funding package and do not hesitate to contact your mentor and/or the Program Director for information about your funding. You are also encouraged to complete a FAFSA application and seek out other sources of funding (such as external scholarships). Some funding is accessible only after completion of the FAFSA.

The Graduate School provides information regarding eligibility requirements and how to fund your education. Each student is responsible for being familiar with the eligibility criteria for their respective award(s). Please visit the graduate funding web page of the Graduate School for additional information (<https://uh.edu/graduate-school/graduate-funding/>).

Full-time students are expected to work no more than 20 hours per week (50% FTE) in order to reserve enough time to focus on their program of study. Students who receive stipends are expected not to take outside employment during the regular Fall and Spring semesters as the stipend already covers 20 hours of employment per week. Students considering pursuing outside employment should obtain prior approval from their primary mentor and the PhD Program Director.

## Policy Waivers

If a student, faculty advisor, or advisory committee member deems that any COMD policy stated in this handbook should be waived, a formal request, signed by both the student and faculty advisor, may be submitted for consideration to the COMD PhD Committee. The request must fully justify the waiver. The waiver must be approved by the Department Chair.

A general petition may also need to be filed (for example, for degree requirement exception or approved course substitution, transfer credit, etc.) with the [Graduate School using a Graduate and Professional Student Petition form \(please click on the link here\)](#).

## **APPENDICES**

- I. Sample Curriculum in Communication Sciences and Disorders
- II. Grievance Policy of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
- III. Curriculum Planning Committee Form
- IV. Change to Curriculum Planning Committee Form
- V. Initial Research Project Defense Form
- VI. Comprehensive Examination Defense Form
- VII. Dissertation Committee Form
- VIII. Change to Dissertation Committee Form
- IX. Dissertation Prospectus Form
- X. Links to Graduate School Forms and Procedures



## Appendix I. Sample Curriculum in Communication Sciences and Disorders

Term	Course Work	SCH	Research Activities / Expectations
Fall 1	PHLS 8319 - Introduction to Inferential Statistics in Psychological and Educational Research*	3	Assemble a Curriculum Planning Committee
	COMD 8391 COMD Research	3	Begin the IRP (e.g., Research questions, literature review)
	Elective	3	
Spring 1	PHLS 8322: Intermediate Statistics in Psychological and Educational Research*	3	Continue the IRP
	COMD 8398 Special Problems – Independent Study or COMD 8397 Selected Topics in COMD	3	
	COMD 8391 COMD Research	3	
Fall 2	Advanced statistics elective	3	Complete the IRP
	COMD 8398 Special Problems – Independent Study or COMD 8397 Selected Topics in COMD	3	
	Teaching Methods	3	
Spring 2	PSYC 6337 Grant Writing	3	Begin the Comprehensive Exam Complete Teaching experience
	COMD 8392 COMD Advanced Research Methods	3	
	COMD 8398 Special Problems – Independent Study or COMD 8397 Selected Topics in COMD	3	
Fall 3	Elective	3	Complete the Comprehensive Exam
	COMD 8399 Dissertation	3	
	COMD 8193 COMD Proseminar	1	Assemble a Doctoral Dissertation committee
Spring 3	COMD 8399 Dissertation	3	Doctoral Dissertation Prospectus
	COMD 8193 COMD Proseminar	1	
Fall 4	COMD 8399 Dissertation	3	Doctoral Dissertation
	COMD 8193 COMD Proseminar	1	
Spring 4	COMD 8399 Dissertation	3	Doctoral Dissertation Defense
Curriculum Total Credits		54	

\* Or commensurate course, depending on the student's needs. The course sequence for the program of study and the electives must be carefully designed in consultation with the mentor and approved by the student's committee.

## Appendix II. Grievance Policy of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

### DEPARTMENT of COMMUNICATION SCIENCES and DISORDERS Grievance Policy

UH COMD uses the definition provided in the CLASS Grievance policy

[\[http://www.uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/\]](http://www.uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/):

An academic grievance refers to an action taken against a student by a member of the faculty (including part-time instructors and teaching assistants), staff, or administration that either violates a university, college, or department academic policy or procedure or prejudicially treats the student on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, or any other nonacademic status. Cases involving prejudicial treatment of any of the categories listed above will be referred to the UH Office of Equal Opportunity Services

[\[https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/about-eos/index.php\]](https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/about-eos/index.php). Department procedures will be put on hold until a report from EOS has been received. The time elapsed for the EOS investigation will not be counted toward any departmental deadlines described below.

All issues must first be addressed through the COMD complaint policy. If the issue is not resolved and it fits the above definition of an academic grievance, the aggrieved student may submit a formal grievance to the Chair of the department involved (or the college officer designated by the Dean if the Department Chair is the focus of the grievance) within 10 days of the conclusion of the complaint procedures.

Definitions:

Grievant: the student making the grievance

Respondent: the person about whom the grievance was made

Panel Chair: the faculty member appointed to lead the grievance hearing

Working days: Monday through Friday, excluding university holidays such as spring break or breaks in between fall-spring, spring-summer, or summer-fall terms

*NOTE: Timelines may be altered during the summer term as described below in Special Consideration During Summer Months*

The following procedures will be used concerning a grievance:

- All communication will occur via uh.edu email addresses per the University policies.
- The Department Chair will be responsible for receiving and reviewing the formal grievance, selecting members of the panel and appointing a Panel Chair. If the Department Chair is named in the grievance, the Vice Chair will take over these responsibilities. If both the Department Chair

and the Vice Chair are named in the grievance, a full-time associate or full professor who is not named in the grievance will be appointed by the Department Chair to serve as the Panel Chair and to initiate the proceedings.

- For grievances against a departmental decision in which a specific person is not named, the Department Chair and appropriate Program Director will serve as respondents.

The Grievance panel will include:

- 3 full-time COMD faculty members (one of whom will serve as Panel Chair) o 1 UH faculty member from outside COMD
- 1 UH student from outside the department at the same level as the grievant (e.g., undergraduate, graduate)
- As stated in the CLASS policy, a student with a justifiable grievance that can be substantiated should initiate academic grievance proceedings as soon as possible after the action in dispute occurs and procedures in the complaint policy have been followed.
- In filing the formal grievance, the grievant must state 1) the specific issue being grieved 2) when they discovered the issue being grieved, 3) a summary of the complaint process the student completed, and 4) what the desired resolution would be.
- The formal grievance must also contain evidence to support the grievance.
  - The Panel Chair will review the formal grievance. If any of the above is not present in the formal grievance, the Panel Chair will inform the grievant of the missing information and allow 2 working days for the grievant to provide the missing information or the grievance will be dismissed.
  - After filing the formal grievance, additional evidence may be submitted ONLY if it meets ALL 3 of the following criteria:
    - the new information was discovered after the submission of the formal grievance
    - it provides novel information that is qualitatively different from what had already been submitted in the formal grievance, AND
    - it has potentially significant implications for the proceedings.
    - Such evidence must be submitted to the Panel Chair no later than 2 working days prior to the hearing, in the form of a 300-word (maximum) addendum.
- Upon receipt of the formal grievance, the Panel Chair will
  - inform the respondent(s) and provide them with a confidential copy of the formal grievance.
  - select the Grievance Panel

- The respondent(s) will have 10 working days to produce a written response to the grievance and submit it to the Panel Chair. Deaf faculty named in the grievance have the option to provide a video response in ASL with simultaneous interpreting into spoken English (voice over) as there is no written form of ASL.
- The grievant will receive a copy of the response composed by the respondent(s) within 5 working days after the Panel Chair's receipt of said response.

A hearing will be scheduled within a maximum of six weeks of receipt of the response to the formal grievance. The Panel Chair will work with the Panel to arrange a date, time and place for the hearing and will inform all parties at least 5 working days prior to the date of the hearing.

The Panel Chair will:

- Provide the formal grievance (including all submitted evidence) and the written response to all members of the grievance panel a minimum of 5 working days prior to the hearing.
- Provide the rules for the hearing (e.g., how much time each party will have to speak) and the names of the members of the grievance hearing panel to all participants (grievant, respondent, and panel) a minimum of 5 working days prior to the hearing.

The grievant may invite an advocate to accompany them. If the grievant chooses to invite legal counsel as the advocate, the grievant must inform the Panel Chair within 10 working days after receipt of the written response. The hearing may be postponed up to 10 working days to allow the respondent time to obtain University legal counsel.

The following hearing guidelines will be in effect:

- The grievant, an advocate (if desired), the respondent, and the full panel will be present at the hearing.
- The grievant, the advocate, and the respondent may speak at the hearing. These parties will present their cases directly to the panel. Discussion between the grievant/advocate, and the respondent is prohibited.
- Only the panel members will be allowed to ask questions of the grievant and the respondent.
- The hearing will be based on the original formal grievance, the response provided by the respondent, and any new evidence introduced prior to the meeting if admitted per the rules described above.
- Recording of the hearings is allowed only by the Panel Chair to be used by the panel in their deliberation and writing their report. The Panel Chair will determine if the hearing will be recorded and will announce it to all parties at the beginning of the hearing. The recording will be destroyed upon submission of the written report.

After both sides have presented their cases and all questions from the panel have been answered to the satisfaction of the panel members, the grievant, advocate, and respondent(s) will be excused and the panel will discuss the findings. The panel's discussion will not be recorded unless agreed upon by the panel. Recording will be solely for the use of the panel in their deliberations and report writing and will be destroyed upon submission of the written report.

The outcome of the grievance process will be a written report from the panel which articulates, at a minimum, a brief summary of the allegations made and the respondent's rebuttal, the findings of the panel (i.e., the panel's judgment of the facts), and the recommendations of the panel. The recommendations must address the specific issues and resolutions provided by the grievant. The report will be completed within 7 working days after the hearing has been conducted. The decision will be sent to the grievant, the respondent, and the Department Chair.

The grievant has the right to appeal the decision of the departmental grievance panel. This must be done in accordance to college procedures available at:

**GRADUATE**

<http://www.uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/>

**UNDERGRADUATE**

[http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=8962#Academic Grievance Policy](http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=8962#Academic_Grievance_Policy)

Procedural notes for the Panel Chair are available on the Department SharePoint site.

**TIMELINE**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Complaint fails to resolve issue	Grievant=10 days to submit formal grievance
Panel Chair receives formal grievance	Panel Chair: 2 days to review for completeness & either return or send to respondent <i>If incomplete, return to Grievant;</i> <i>Grievant: 2 days to revise &amp; resubmit</i>
Respondent receives formal grievance	Respondent:10 days to submit response to Panel Chair

Panel Chair receives response	Panel Chair: 5 days to send response to Grievant Panel Chair: 6 weeks to schedule hearing
Panel Chair scheduling hearing	Grievant: announce legal advocate within 10 days Panel Chair: send date/time to all parties 5 days prior to hearing
Hearing held	Panel Chair: 7 days to submit written report to all parties

**Special Consideration During Summer Months**

Most COMD faculty work 9-month contracts (Mid-August through mid-May), and many students are not engaged in on-campus University work over the summer. Therefore, in order to offer the grievant a fair hearing with a full committee, the departmental timelines established in the policy may not be met during summer months. A student may file a grievance during the summer, defined as May 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, with the understanding and acknowledgement that the time lines could be altered based on availability of a full committee. It should be understood, however, that every effort will be made by the department to continue the process in a timely fashion.

To be completed and submitted with any grievance filed between May 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have been informed of and agree to waiving of specific timeframes for this grievance submitted during the University summer months of May through August. I have received assurance from the Communication Sciences and Disorders department that even with this waiver in effect, every effort will be made to conduct the process in a timely fashion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Appendix III. PhD Curriculum Planning Committee Form

#### University of Houston Communication Sciences and Disorders PhD Curriculum Planning Committee Form

*Each doctoral student is required to form a Curriculum Planning Committee at the beginning of their program. Of the three committee members, two must be from the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department. The third may be from another UH department or an outside expert.*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

PeopleSoft ID \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Committee Members

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair/Mentor Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department/Institution (if outside UH COMD)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of PhD Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix IV. Curriculum Committee Change Form

### University of Houston Communication Sciences and Disorders Curriculum Planning Committee Change Form

*(Attach the previously completed form along with the change form when requesting signatures)*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ PSID \_\_\_\_\_

It is requested that the following changes be made to the curriculum planning committee of the student named above:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Added</b>	<b>Removed</b>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of PhD Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix V. Initial Research Project Defense Form







## **Appendix VII. Dissertation Committee Appointment Form**



## Appendix IX: Links to Graduate School Forms and Procedures

*NOTE: Please note that the web page links may change. This collection of links is provided for your convenience, but it is the student's responsibility to obtain and verify that the most current form is used. This is not a comprehensive list of all forms and procedures.*

1. Graduate School Forms and Procedures: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/>
2. General Petition Form: <https://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/gpsp-updated-petition-102020.pdf>
3. General Petition Form Instructions: [https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/gpsp\\_instructions.pdf](https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/gpsp_instructions.pdf)
4. Student-Initiated Drop: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/student-initiated-drop-form1.pdf>
5. Student-Initiated Term Withdrawal: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/uh-official-term-withdrawal-form.pdf>
6. Medical/Administrative Term Withdrawal Request: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/forms/gradprof-med-adm-withdrawal-request1.pdf>
7. Inter-Institutional Course Registration Forms: <https://www.uh.edu/academics/forms/#IICR>
8. Written Dissertation Approval Form: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/academics/thesis/written-thesis-dissertation-approval-form-082019.pdf>
9. Thesis/Dissertation Template (Front Matter): <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/academics/thesis/uhgs-template-front-matter-082019.docx>
10. Resources for teaching and learning:
  - a. Faculty Engagement and Development: <https://www.uh.edu/provost/faculty/current/fed/services/index.php>
  - b. Graduate Professional and Personal Development: <https://uh.edu/graduate-school/graduate-professional-and-personal-development/>