

Programme Specification

MSc in Speech and Language Therapy (full-time)

PFTSPEECHM

For students entering in 2024/25

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	MSc in Speech and Language Therapy (full-time) - 2 years
Accreditation	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

The programme aims to provide you with a modern and unique Master's degree-level education in Speech and Language Therapy which meets University standards and is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Successful completion of this degree gives you the knowledge, skills and competencies to apply to the HCPC for registration as a speech and language therapist (SLT).

This programme is designed to enable you to apply immediately the knowledge and understanding from theoretical modules within your clinical placements and to develop flexible and critically reflective practice. To support your development across this intensive programme, theory and practice are aligned throughout your programme.

Year 1 introduces you to core subjects that underpin understanding of speech, language, communication and eating, drinking and swallowing needs, including linguistics, phonetics and phonology, medical studies, and psychology. You will begin to develop your professional and clinical skills as a speech and language therapist, which includes development of skills in communication, observation and the collection and analysis of data, as well as identifying your own learning and development needs via the development of reflective skills. Your academic knowledge will be integrated with clinical practice in clinical placements both at the University and externally.

Year 2: You will study the evidence base relevant to assessment, differential diagnosis and treatment of speech, language, communication and eating, drinking and swallowing needs and disorders across the lifespan in a variety of conditions and across service delivery models. You will develop and extend your knowledge and understanding of the evidence base for assessment, diagnosis and intervention in acquired speech, language and cognitive communication disorders with adults, including disorders of eating, drinking and swallowing.

You will prepare and carry out your own research, including statistical analysis. You will focus on developing clinical skills with increasing emphasis on professional development and independence as a practitioner working with children and adults. You will be able to independently manage a client's clinical need in a safe, holistic and culturally sensitive manner, demonstrating evidence-based management of clients with speech, language, communication and swallowing disorders across the life span. You will design, plan and implement an independent research project and write it up as a dissertation, preparing you to apply your knowledge and understanding to initiate and carry out projects which can contribute to the evidence base once you have graduated.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MSc in Speech and Language Therapy (full-time)

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

Learning outcomes	
1	Demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge which underlies the discipline of speech and language therapy, including phonetics and phonology and linguistics, medicine, psychology and professional clinical studies;
2	Apply understanding and knowledge of speech, language, communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan to current clinical practice, including in the promotion and prevention of ill health;
3	Evaluate evidence-based assessment and treatment (management) of clients with speech, language, communication, and eating, drinking and swallowing disorders across the lifespan;
4	Solve clinical problems using evidence-based clinical reasoning through the process of appraisal and critical evaluation within the scope of HCPC standards of proficiency;
5	Demonstrate the ability to manage autonomously, and within multidisciplinary teams and organisations, clients' clinical needs in a safe, holistic, culturally sensitive, diverse and inclusive manner within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession and in compliance with values of the University, NHS and HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics, applying the principle of clinical governance in all professional activities;
6	Demonstrate effective and context-sensitive written and spoken communication skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to service users, their relatives and carers, colleagues and others;
7	Adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups and individuals and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner, whilst using flexible and critically reflective practice with an awareness of their own Continuing Professional Development needs;
8	Be able to use research enquiry to engage in research projects in line with ethical guidelines and audit and review of quality management and outcome measures.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

Module information

The programme comprises 180 credits each year, allocated across a range of compulsory modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Compulsory modules

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PLMCP1R	Clinical Practice 1	40	M
PLMCP2R	Clinical Practice 2	60	M
PLMCPP	Clinical Phonetics and Phonology	20	M
PLMFLP	Foundations of Linguistics, Phonetics and Phonology	20	M
PLMLAP	Language Acquisition and Processing	20	M
PLMM1	Medicine 1	20	M
PLMM2	Medicine 2	20	M
PLMPSY	Psychology for Speech and Language Therapy	20	M
PLMSLC1	Speech Language and Communication 1 M	20	M

Year 2 modules

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PLMCP2R	Clinical Practice 2	60	M
PLMRD	Research and Dissertation	40	M
PLMSLC2	Speech Language and Communication 2 M (Paediatric)	40	M
PLMSLC3	Speech Language and Communication 3 M (Adult)	20	M
PLMSLC4	Speech Language and Communication 4 M (Across the Lifespan)	20	M

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

Placement opportunities

Placements are an integral and mandatory part of the Clinical Practice 1 and Clinical Practice 2. These placements will be sourced for you by the University.

There may be some funding for placements from Health Education England. Amounts and allowances will vary.

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

Optional modules

There are no optional modules, all modules are compulsory.

Teaching and learning delivery

You will experience a range of approaches to teaching, supported by digitally enabled learning, which are tailored to learning outcomes of the different subjects you will study and the overall objectives of the programme. Some of the teaching will be delivered in lectures and there is a lot of opportunity for small group work in seminars and practical classes. In addition, digitally-enabled learning is utilised for those modules where it is most appropriate. You will attend clinical practice placements in a variety of clinical settings where your development as a clinician is supported by placement educators who are practising speech and language therapists who have been trained to support students. You will be exposed to a variety of SLT service delivery and locations, such as telehealth and hospital and school settings. This will enable you to learn to utilise and apply your knowledge and skills across different settings and client groups in preparation for graduation. You will be offered individual and group support by a clinical tutor from the University to develop and embed your clinical skills.

A significant amount of your teaching in the speech, language and communication modules and clinical modules will be focused on the process of clinical reasoning from year one onwards, with an emphasis on case-based learning. This begins your journey to a clinically reflective practitioner. You will attend clinical practice from year one to enable you to apply theory to practice as early as possible. You will visit a local family with a young infant regularly to observe the child's growth and development across all domains which can be interpreted by reference to your year one modules from linguistics, medicine, psychology and clinical practice. Over years 1 and 2, you will have ongoing clinical practice both within the University and externally. You will learn with and learn from other students and professionals in interprofessional learning sessions throughout your programme, supporting your development as a member of the multidisciplinary team.

You will be taught by qualified clinicians and specialists in their field. The breadth of knowledge and specialist interests within the department ensures that we can then offer a range of dissertation topics to students.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

The programme is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and accredited by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). Graduates will be eligible for graduate membership of the RCSLT and will be eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC to work as a Speech and Language Therapist.

This approval requires students to adhere to progression requirements and to also pass the following modules to demonstrate competency to be awarded the Speech and Language Therapy degree: PLMSLC1, PLMFLP, PLMCPP, PLMPSY, PLMM1, PLMCP1R, PLMSLC2, PLMSLC3, PLMSLC4, and PLMCP2R. Placements must be passed in order for students to meet the practice education hours specified by the RCSLT as needing to be completed across the duration of the programme.

To preserve academic and clinical coherence and currency, the RCSLT expects that the maximum time taken from programme entry until registration eligibility should normally be no more than two years longer than the typical length of the programme (i.e., no more than four years).

DBS requirements and Health and professional requirements

In order to undertake clinical placements, students will be required to have an enhanced criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring Service as part of the admissions process. Students are also required to disclose any relevant criminal convictions accrued after students start the programme. Students must complete a health questionnaire to demonstrate fitness for the programme and also produce evidence of having appropriate vaccinations to complete clinical placements. Students are required to inform the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences of any change in circumstances that may affect their ability, or suitability, to continue their studies. Students are also expected to maintain behaviours associated with a healthcare professional and must abide by University regulations, the University Fitness to Practice Policy, the Health and Care Professions Council Standards for Conduct, Ethics and Performance, and Student Code of Conduct. Deviation from these standards may lead to the instigation of University Academic Misconduct and/or Fitness to Practice processes.

Assessment

The key to the assessment strategy is to enable you to demonstrate achievement of programme level learning outcomes, which are derived from the HCPC and RCSLT competencies, thus by successful completion of the programme, you will have demonstrated achievement of competencies required for a newly qualified speech and language therapist at Master's level.

To this end, the assessments across the programme aim to develop towards tasks and outputs you will need as a qualified SLT. For example, you will produce a professional portfolio. This assessment mirrors the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) portfolio you are required to complete as a qualified SLT.

Oral presentations, case reports and final clinical exams reflect what you will do in practice. The case reports initially focus on new knowledge in child development, linguistics, and

phonetics and phonology in year one, but subsume linguistics, medicine, phonetics and phonology, and communication/eating drinking and swallowing disorders by year 2 within a holistic inclusive approach.

Your dissertation offers you the opportunity to explore a topic in detail demonstrating research skills and analysis and critical thinking, all of which form the backbone of the audits and service reviews you may do once you graduate, as well as developing skills for further postgraduate study.

Progression

To progress from year one to year two, students must achieve:

- i. an average mark of 50% in year one; and
- ii. a module mark of at least 50% in modules PLMSLC1, PLMFLP, PLMCPP, PLMPSY, PLMM1 and PLMCP1R
- iii. a pass in the placement report and a mark of at least 40% in each written assignment and the presentation in PLMCP1R.

Students who re-take and fail at re-take to achieve these requirements may be eligible for a PG Diploma or a PG Certificate in Language and Communication Sciences. These awards do not provide a qualification to practice as a Speech and Language Therapist.

Classification

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark Interpretation

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard

0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degree

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits
- (ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits
- (iii) not more than 20 credits with a mark below 40%
- (iv) a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation

In addition, for all classifications for the MSc Speech & Language Therapy, students must achieve:

(v) An overall weighted average of at least 50% over 360 credits

(vi) a module mark of at least 50% in modules PLMSLC2, PLMSLC3, PLMSLC4, and PLMCP2R

(vii) a mark of at least 50% in each assessment in PLMCP2R and a pass in the placement clinical report forms.

Weighting for classification purposes is 40% for year one and 60% for year two.

Students who gain a module mark of 70 or more in PLMCP2 will be eligible for a Clinical Distinction.

Candidates awarded the MSc Speech and Language Therapy may apply to register with the HCPC as a Speech and Language Therapist.

Students who do not meet the programme-specific requirements for the MSc Speech Language Therapy described above, but meet the threshold requirements for the award of a Masters, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, may be eligible for an exit award (MSc/PGDip/PGCert Language and Communication Sciences). Please note that these exit awards do not provide eligibility to register with the HCPC or to practice as a Speech and Language Therapist.

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 360 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 360 credits and marks of 70% in at least 180 credits

AND

A mark of at least 60% in the dissertation

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 360 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 360 credits and marks of 60% in at least 180 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits
- (ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits
- (iii) not more than 20 credits with a mark below 40%

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 credits
- (ii) no marks below 40%

Additional costs of the programme

During the programme of study students will incur some additional costs. For textbooks and similar learning resources, we recommend that you budget between £100 to £200 a year. Some books may be available second-hand, which will reduce costs. A range of resources to support the curriculum, including textbooks and electronic resources, are available through the library. Reading lists and module specific costs are listed on the individual module descriptions. Printing and photocopying facilities are available on campus at a cost of £0.05 per page (price for 2022-2023). Students need to travel to external clinical placements that are offered across a large geographical area. While some placements will be local to the University others will require travel by public transport or car which will involve additional cost depending on the distance and mode of travel. There will be some funding attached to this from Health Education England. Amounts and allowances will vary. The University

provides funds for the enhanced DBS check required of all students at the beginning of the programme, but does not fund the update service.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. The estimates were calculated in 2023.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

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8 August 2023

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