

Guidelines for Undergraduate/Graduate Students in Communication Disorders with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

“It is the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) that students and professionals in communication sciences and disorders who speak with accents and/or dialects can effectively provide speech, language, and audiological services to persons with communication disorders as long as they have the expected level of knowledge in normal and disordered communication, the expected level of diagnostic and clinical case management skills, and if modeling is necessary, are able to model the target phoneme, grammatical feature, or other aspect of speech and language that characterizes the client’s particular problem.” (ASHA position statement, 1998. *Students and Professionals Who Speak English with Accents and Nonstandard Dialects: Issues and Recommendations.*)

Competence in oral and written English is required for both the academic and clinical practicum requirements of the Communication Disorders program at Southeast Missouri State University. If a faculty member in the Department of Communication Disorders identifies an undergraduate or graduate student who has limited English proficiency or speaks a nonstandard American English dialect, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Refer the student to his/her academic advisor within the Department. If necessary, the student and advisor will develop a Student Assistance Plan (SAP) for improvement of Standard American English skills. The SAP may include, but will not be limited to, the following:
 - a. enrollment in ESL instruction in the Center for Speech and Hearing
 - b. tutoring/mentoring in Standard American English with a faculty member or graduate assistant in the Department of Communication Disorders
 - c. referral to an area speech-language pathologist who has experience with ESL clients
2. The student must meet the goals of the Student Assistance Plan before beginning clinical practicum. If the student is not able to satisfactorily meet the goals, he/she will be counseled regarding his/her strengths and weaknesses in Standard American English and how these might affect employers’ perceptions or impact their ability to perform in various work settings.
3. The student will be given an opportunity to continue remediation (if goals have not been met) or may choose to leave the program.