

## **SFSU NSSLHA's Guide to Applying to Grad School**

Applying to grad school can be a daunting task! Each university has it's own, requirements, deadlines and specifications for how applications must be prepared and submitted. But the SFSU NSSLHA Chapter is here to help!! Listed below are the common requirements for most Graduate Speech Language Pathology Programs.

### **Applications**

For every university you apply to you are required to submit two applications, one application directly to the department and one application to the university's office of graduate admissions. California State Universities, including San Francisco State, no longer accept paper applications to graduate programs. Applications must be submitted online via CSU Mentor.

[http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmissionApp/grad\\_apply.asp](http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmissionApp/grad_apply.asp)

Be sure you check each university's graduate admission requirements before applying as well as the department's requirements.

*SFSU Says: Apply to San Francisco State University's Graduate Division using the Graduate/Post-baccalaureate application to The California State University. Application. The application can be filled out online at [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu). The program application can be downloaded from the web at [www.sfsu.edu/~cstpc](http://www.sfsu.edu/~cstpc), or picked in up in Burk Hall 156, or 244.*

### **Transcripts**

You will need a set of transcripts for every college you have attended. Actually, just like applications, you will need to submit two copies of your transcripts, one to the university and one directly to the department. In most cases these must be official sealed transcripts. Most programs ask that you include these with the application packet, however this often is problematic because many colleges will not send official transcripts to the student. In this case you must have the transcripts sent to the university directly.

Requesting transcripts, although it sounds easy enough, can be tedious and time consuming. For example if you've attended two colleges in your academic career and are applying to four graduate programs that's a total of 16 transcripts that need to be requested! For some colleges you can order transcripts online and for others you have to mail in or fax a form for each transcript requested.

*SFSU Says: Submit one official set of sealed transcripts from every college or university attended. This is in addition to transcripts for the CSU Graduate application. You should collect all official transcripts and submit them with the application. SFSU transcripts can be unofficial copies from MySFSU.*

### **Letters of Recommendation**

Speech Language Pathology/Communicative Disorders graduate programs usually require applicants to submit letters of recommendation. These letters are *very, very* important. While your transcript, resume, and personal statement or admissions essay are vital components to your application, an excellent letter of recommendation can compensate for weaknesses in any of these areas.

Each University requires that these be submitted in a specific way. Some require that the writers of your letters fill out a form to submit along with the letter of recommendation. These forms can usually be found on the departments website. Each university also requires a different number of letters, usually two or three.

When asking for a letter prepare in advance. You should provide each writer with enough material to write a meaningful and personalized recommendation. Provide each of them with a copy of your transcript, your letter of intent, resume, and for professors especially, any work that you have from classes you've taken with them. If possible give them the original draft with their grade/comments. Also be sure to include forms (if any) required by each school you are applying to. You might want to consider placing all materials in a large pre-stamped envelope that is already addressed to you. This way the writer can simply return the letters to you once completed.

*SFSU says: Candidates must submit at least two letters of recommendation. Letters should come from individuals who have observed and collaborated with the applicant in a professional or educational setting. It is preferred that the letters be from people who can comment on the applicant's experiences with people with disabilities and or in an educational setting. It is also appropriate to have recommendations from those who can speak to the applicant's academic ability and potential for success in a graduate-level program. Additional letters beyond the required two will also be accepted to augment the application. Letters need to be typed on professional letterhead with original signatures. Letters from relatives are not acceptable.*

## **Resume**

This is a great place to include any info that you could not squeeze into your letter of intent. Although length and organization may vary the following format is standard for a grad-school resume:

*Objective* – A short sentence identifying the school and the program to which you are applying. *Example: To gain admittance into San Francisco State's Speech Language Pathology Master's Program.*

*Education* – This should be the most important entry in your resume. After providing the basics (name of undergraduate college / university, degree, graduation date, major, minor, GPA, etc), select the outstanding academic accomplishments to highlight for the admissions committee. These may be sub-topics under Education or they may be their own categories. Areas that may be included are Research, Scholarships, Independent Study, International Study, Honoraries, Conferences, Presentations, and Publications.

*Academic Experience/Course Highlights* – Highlight particularly relevant academic courses by providing more details about these courses. Describe two to three upper-level courses that provided hands-on experiences or in-depth study with bullet statements. Include only the most salient courses relevant to your intended graduate school major. Do not list all courses.

*Internship, Volunteer, and/or Related Experiences* – While your academic abilities are the most essential assets to emphasize, experiences in the field related to your intended graduate school major are significant, too. Most graduate schools prefer applicants with a combination of academic and experiential preparation. Some graduate schools require volunteer or internship experience.

*Activities* – If you participated in campus or community activities that developed your leadership, time management, or other skills important to your success in graduate school, include these activities and provide details that show your active participation.

*SFSU says: You may include information about your academic, employment, and volunteer experiences that are pertinent your application and program objective.*

## **Letter of Intent**

Graduate and professional schools often require some sort of written statement -- often called a "statement of purpose," "personal statement," or "letter of intent"-- as a part of the application. Some universities require that statements include rather specific information--for example, the applicant's intended area of study within the field of Speech Language pathology. Still others are quite unstructured, leaving the applicant free to address a wide range of matters. The importance of the statement varies from school to school.

*SFSU says: Applicants must submit a typed essay outlining personal attributes and professional experiences that illustrate a potential for excellence in the field. The essay should also include a brief discussion of future professional and academic goals. The essay should be no longer than two double-spaced pages.*

## **Standardized Tests**

This is another requirement that varies from program to program. Some require the GRE, some require the GRE only if your GPA is below 3.5 and, some require no standardized test scores at all. SFSU has a written English Proficiency requirement that can be met through a number of standardized tests (see below).

The best advice we have to offer regarding standardized tests is to check requirements at each program you plan on applying to early. You need time to study for the test, take the test and receive the scores, all before our application deadline. And if you do not feel confident with the test then you may even want to allow time to retake the test and raise your score.

*SFSU's WRITTEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT:* Each graduate student must demonstrate the ability to write English correctly and effectively. To assure that each graduate student has the required proficiency in written English, two distinct assessments are made by the major department: Level One and Level Two. The Level One requirement must be met prior to admission. Applicants will be required to submit evidence of one of the following as part of their application for admission to the M.A. in Special Education:

1. Score of at least 4.0/6.0 on the GRE Analytical Writing Test or GMAT Analytic Writing Assessment
2. Score of at least 4.5/6.0 on the essay test of the paper-based [PBT] TOEFL (a minimum score of 24/3 on the Writing section of the Internet-based test [iBT] TOEFL)
3. Score of at least 6.5/9.0 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) writing test, or a concordant score on the Pearson Test of English
4. A passing status score of at least 220 on the CSET Writing Skills Test. (NOTE: If an applicant passes the three (3) CSET Multiple Subject Subtests AND passes the related CSET Multiple Subject Writing Test, the applicant will meet the Level I English Proficiency requirement for the Masters degree at SFSU, as well as the Basic Skills Requirement for their CTC credential.

## **Final Thoughts**

- The most important thing to remember is to *start early*.
- Decide which schools you would like to apply to and review their requirements in each area.
- Allow yourself time to prepare for any standardized tests that may be required.
- Allow plenty of time to write a well structured letter of intent and resume.
- Request transcripts early.
- Ask for recommendations early on and provide plenty of material.
- Begin to gain experience through volunteering and employment ASAP.
- Sign up for NSSLHA's Volunteer Committee to learn about volunteer experiences.
- Get to know the faculty!!

## **Helpful Websites**

CSU Mentor:

[http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmissionApp/grad\\_apply.asp](http://www.csumentor.edu/AdmissionApp/grad_apply.asp)

SFSU's CD Website for Prospective Students:

<http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~bettyyu/cdprogram/prospstds.html>

Link to SFSU's CD Graduate Application Packet:

<http://coe.sfsu.edu/docs/cstpc/download/cdpacket.pdf>

## **Addresses for SFSU Applications**

SFSU's Graduate Admissions Office (for transcripts):

San Francisco State University  
Graduate Admissions, ADM 250  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132

SFSU's Communicative Disorders Graduate Admissions

Credential Services Office ATTN: Credential Admissions CD  
College of Education - Burk Hall 244  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132-4158