



Chemeketa Community College Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

FAQ

Q: What do the acronyms SLPA and SLP mean?

SLP= Speech Language Pathologist
SLPA= Speech Language Pathology Assistant

Q: What do I need to do to complete the SLPA program?

In order to qualify to apply for certification as a Speech Language Pathology Assistant, an individual needs to submit transcripts to the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology showing completion of *45 general education credits and 45 credits technical speech pathology coursework*. Students also need to satisfactorily complete 100 hours of clinical interaction in the practicum courses. The Chemeketa Community College program fulfills the 45 speech pathology coursework requirement. A student may have already completed 45 credits in a different area and this will suffice for the general education requirement.

Chemeketa Community College offers several options for students:

(1) If a student already has completed the general education requirement for the degree (whether with completion of a Associates, or Bachelor degree or a combination of completion of 45 general education credits) the student would just need to complete the 45 credits of technical coursework to be eligible to apply for certification as an SLPA.

* In this scenario, the student may want to have their transcript analyzed to see if they meet the requirements for the Associates of Applied Science Degree in Speech Language Pathology Assisting.

(2) Students may earn an Associates of Applied Science degree in Speech Language Pathology Assisting with completion of the 45 technical credits in the SLPA program and an additional 45 credits in general education areas. Students would need to meet with a general counselor for the college to discuss what classes would need to be completed to meet the requirement for the degree.

Q: How do I get started?

To get started, a student will need to do the following:

- Submit a student record form to Chemeketa to apply for enrollment. This form is available to print off on the main college website: www.chemeketa.edu (admissions)
- Take a placement test to determine your skills in math, reading, and writing. This test may be taken at your local community college. The testing schedule and details are on the main college website.
- Meet with a college counselor to determine what general education classes need to be completed for degree planning. AND/OR meet with Ashley Northam to determine a plan for completing the specific courses in the SLPA program. Ashley can “meet” via email

correspondence, scheduled phone conference, or in person via appointment.

- Once the college receives your student record form, they will mail you a user name and password. "My Chemeketa" is the college information system that allows you to register for classes, view grades, and access your schedule, access online websites for classes. Once you receive access, log into the system and register for the classes outlined in your specific plan with the college counselor and/or the SLPA program.
- You will be able to access the online classes via a link in Pipeline called "My Courses". This menu will list the specific courses you are enrolled in and will provide a link to those class websites. The class website will contain all class material for the term.

Q:I have a Bachelor's degree already, what do I need to do to complete the program?

If you already have a Bachelor's degree in another area, you will just need to complete the 45 technical credits in Speech Language Pathology Assisting.

Q: Does Chemeketa issue certification for SLPA?

No. Certification as a Speech Language Pathology Assistant is issued via a state agency called the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology. This office can be reached via phone: (503) 731-4050. or via their website: <http://bspa.state.or.us/>
The Oregon Board of Examiners website also contains the statues on SLPA. To access from their main site:

Link to "RULES/STATUES"

Link to "Oregon Administrative Rules. Chapter 335 Board of Examiners for Speech Pathology and Audiology"

Scroll down to "DIVISION 95" for specific rules on Speech Language Pathology Assistants.

Q:I have a Bachelors degree in Communication Disorders? What do I need to do to get certification as an SLPA?

If a student possesses a Bachelors degree in Communication Disorders from a 4 year institution, they are eligible to practice as a Speech Language Pathology Assistant by completing the 1 terms of clinical practicum at Chemeketa Community College. Even if hours have already been "completed" in the past, the student must enroll in the practicum classes and collect the 100+ clinical hours. This is the requirement set forth by the Oregon Board of Examiners office.

Q: What are the approximate costs involved?

Approximately, each class is 3 credits, and has a total cost per class of \$225.00 including applicable fees. Additionally, books are roughly \$50 per class on average with some class texts costing more, while some classes do not require a text. Program costs are roughly estimated at \$ 4000.00

Q: How do I apply for certification? Is there an exam?

Once a student has completed the 45 technical program credits, as well as 45 general education credits, the student submits official transcripts and an application to the Oregon Board of Examiners office. More information can be found on their website: <http://bspa.state.or.us/>

Q: How does an online class work?

Online classes are fairly new as a mode of delivering coursework. An online class is posted on a class “website” which a student will access via their MY CHEMEKETA account with the college. Once on the class website, the student will find links to the syllabus, an introduction to the instructor, a link to the discussion portion of the class, as well as a coursework page containing weekly lecture, assignment, and reading material. Typically weekly “lectures” are posted on a specific day of the week (Wednesday for example). The lecture, reading and assignment are available that day of each week of the term. The student will have approximately 7 days to log in read the lecture, complete the reading assignment from the text, complete any class assignments for the week, and participate in the online discussion for the week if applicable. There is no specific time the student needs to be “ONLINE” or on the website. The student can complete the coursework and correspond in the discussion area 24/7. This makes it extremely flexible for students who work, have families or other responsibilities to find time each week to complete the coursework prior to the due date. The instructor will also correspond with students in the discussion area, as well as post grades and give feedback. Exams are also typically available in an online format.

Q: What does the job outlook look like? What is the approximate pay range?

At this point, the job outlook is extremely good. There is a critical shortage of Master’s level Speech Language Pathologists in the state and nation as a whole. While an SLPA cannot perform the duties of a SLP, the SLPA can be used to stretch the resources of existing SLP services. SLPAs are relatively new as a job category, so there is some pioneering efforts in term of defining salary requirements and standardizing job descriptions within districts. The state of Oregon passed a law mandating training and certification of SLPAs. For this reason, the job outlook and security in Oregon is good because individuals need to be certified if they are working in the area of Speech Pathology. Generally the pay range has been \$14-\$20 per hour with benefits. Most jobs currently are in school districts (K-12) or with Educational Service Districts (birth-5). Additionally there have been some openings in private practice settings and clinics. At this time, there has not been hiring in the area of practice in hospitals or nursing care centers working with older adults. This is due to the fact that at this time Medicare is not reimbursing for services provided by a SLPA. However, the general feeling is that this will also be an employment setting in the future.

Q: Do you have a job placement service?

The department does not have a job placement service at this time. However, the department does collect vacancy notices from around the state which is available to students.

Q: How do I access the classes?

Online classes can be accessed by logging into the campus MY CHEMEKETA system. From there, you will link to “MY COURSES” and click on the link to the specific course homepage. All lecture material, reading assignments, and class assignments as well as online discussion will be in this location.

Q: How do I talk to a counselor about the general education requirements?

A student can contact the counseling center at Chemeketa Community College: (503) 399-5120. or via email: advising@chemeketa.edu A student may meet with a counselor in person, via email correspondence or via phone.

Q: Where do I send a copy of my transcript?

A student can send a copy of their transcripts to Enrollment Services:
Enrollment Services Bldg 2-200
Chemeketa Community College
PO Box 14007
Salem, OR 97309-7070
Phone: (503) 399-5006
Fax: (503) 399-3918

* Official copies will need to be sent from the prior college/universities in a sealed envelope.

Q: Who do I talk to about advising?

For questions about general advising, please speak to someone in the Counseling and Career Services Department. For questions about specific SLPA program advising, please contact Ashley Northam.

Q: What is the work load like for the program?

Typically, students enroll in 2-3 courses each term. Each class is 3 credits. This would be considered part time attendance. Plan to spend approximately 6-8 hours per week per class. Of course this is dependent on a student's own skills and abilities. Most students in the program attend part time, continue to work part-full time in employment, and have other outside responsibilities such as family.

Q: What do I need in terms of technology to do this program?

A student will need to have access to a computer, as well as an email account and the skills to send/receive email and post attachments.

It is necessary to have a high speed internet connection to access online classes.

However, since everything is online, a student could access the courses from other locations such as the public library etc. Some students do have dial-up connections but have had some issues in downloading information at times.

Q: When can I start the program?

The program has an application process in place. Applications are due in July and students accepted will be notified in August. Classes for accepted students begin in Fall term. There is an outline of coursework on the program website for reference.

Q: Is there an entry fee or application?

There is no entry fee. The SLPA program does require an application for admission to the SLPA program.

Q: If I collect 100 hours in my first term of practicum do I have to take the second practicum class?

Yes. A student will still need to complete the second practicum class (SLP 190) in order to meet the 45 credit technical requirement.

Q: How does the practicum work?

For the 2 terms of practicum, the student is assigned a Speech Language Pathologist who works as the SLPA's supervisor during practicum. The student and the SLP work together to define a schedule of clinical observation and practicum opportunities that works with both schedules. This is typically not a full time assignment because only a minimum of 100 clinical observation hours need to be completed over the course of both terms. The student will be asked to assist in locating prospective SLPs. In most cases, the student may already work in a school setting and a supervising SLP may already be available. The student would be able to continue working in that capacity while collecting clinical observation hours. The practicum class itself is online. The class meets weekly for a discussion on line as well as having text reading assignments and online research. Along with weekly lecture topics, text reading, and internet research, students set individual goals or areas of growth for themselves and work towards those goals in both terms of practicum.

Q: What are my options if I wanted to go on for a Master's degree in Speech Language Pathology?

If a student was planning to pursue an advanced degree in Speech Pathology, the AAS degree from Chemeketa would not necessarily replace any upper division credits at a 4 year university. The AAS degree would be a step along the way to taking upper division coursework in the discipline area. However, having some foundational knowledge in Speech Pathology can only be viewed as an asset when pursuing an advanced degree and continuing to take upper division coursework at a 4 year university. At this point, there are not classes offered at Chemeketa that could be taken to replace a class in the area of Speech Pathology at a 4 year university. This is because the courses at Chemeketa are considered lower division, while the courses at a university would be considered upper division coursework. The benefit of gaining a AAS degree in Speech Language Pathology Assisting would be the exposure and experience in the field of Speech Pathology prior to entering graduate school.

Q: What does an SLPA do? How does an SLPA work with a Speech Language Pathologist?

A SLPA works under the supervision of a Speech Language Pathologist. The SLPA follows the treatment plans developed by the SLP to complete lesson plans for therapy, deliver therapy to individual and in group settings, collect data, collaborate with teachers in the students' classroom as well as many other duties. The SLP is responsible for doing all diagnostic work, evaluations, developing and writing IEPs for students. The SLP also supervises the SLPA a specific percentage of the time. The SLP develops treatment plans for students and works with the SLPA to develop lesson plans to deliver therapy. The SLPA is responsible for running therapy groups under the direction of the SLP. Some SLPAs also have specific training in other areas including modifying curriculum and Augmentative Communication Device development.

Q: How long has this program been in place?

The program at Chemeketa Community College has been in place approximately 4 years. It continues to grow to keep up with the demand in the state and throughout the country. It is the only online SLPA program of its kind. The Chemeketa program was developed using the original guidelines from the American Speech Language Hearing Association. It is a comprehensive training program for SLPAs.

Q: Where do SLPAs typically find jobs?

Jobs are typically found in education settings at this time. This would include K-12 schools, as well as ESDs (birth-5 year). There are additionally some jobs found in private practice and clinic settings.