

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Pre-Majors

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## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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### • Why is Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology a screened major?

- The undergraduate degree in speech language pathology and audiology prepares students for graduate study in either field. Getting into graduate school in these fields is competitive. Pre-major students are screened into the major based on grades. This process insures that students accepted into the undergraduate major are on the right path to be accepted into graduate school. There is nothing worse than finishing the undergraduate degree and reaching a dead end. We think it's better to learn the major is not a "good fit" during the freshman or sophomore year. The screening process also lets us control class size and sequence, to insure that students get the classes they need in order to graduate on time.

### • What do I have to do to be eligible for screening into the major?

- All students who want to enter the SPPA major need to: **(1)** complete two semesters of undergraduate courses (or a minimum of 27 credits) and 5 required pre-requisite courses (see website for specific courses). Courses can be taken at Towson University or transferred from other colleges. All courses must be ***completed by the end of May*** when admissions are processed. Students who have not completed all 5 courses by that date are not eligible for admission into the major until following May. **(2)** Watch the on-line Pre-Major Orientation video. **(3)** Complete the online Pre-Major Application and submit it to the department **(4)** Declare the SPPA major in Peoplesoft or on your TU application, **(5)** Get your speech and hearing screened at the Institute for Well Being (IWB) Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. You will receive an email at the beginning of the regular semester with instructions on how to do this. (Transfer students who start the program after the May screening will have the speech-language & hearing screening in September). ***All of these steps are outlined on the department website.***

### • What classes must I take to be eligible for screening into the major?

- Students must complete all of the following courses.
  - ENGL 102 or 190 English Composition (3)
  - MATH 109 or 111 or 115\* or 119\* College Algebra, pre-calculus, or above (3)
  - PSYC 101 or 102 Intro to Psychology (3)
  - BIOL 190/192 or 201 Biology for Health Science Majors with lab or Cellular Biology (4+)
  - One class from Group A or Group B: Group A: CHEM 121+121L, CHEM 131+131L, PHYS 202, PHYS 211 Group B: SOCI 101/102, ANTH 207/210, EDUC 203. (\*CHEM requires MATH 115 or 119)

- **If I have volunteer experience or have worked in a healthcare field, will that improve my chances of getting into the major?**

- No. Admissions decisions are based solely on grades. We find that grades, especially grades in the prerequisite classes, are the best predictor of who will succeed academically in the SPPA major. This doesn't mean we don't value your previous volunteer experience, desire to help people, or nice personality; we do. Those factors are good predictors of your future clinical interactions with patients. However, patients deserve to receive professional services from someone who is not only pleasant and personable, but also "knows their stuff." The best predictor of whether you "know your stuff," is grades. Plan to do well in all of your classes!

- **When is the admission decision made for the Speech-Language Pathology/Audiology major?**

- We admit students into the program once each year after spring semester grades are posted. You will be notified of your acceptance status in June and, if admitted, you will begin taking classes in the fall.

- **How are students ranked for admission?**

- We compute two separate GPAs then average them together to determine your ranking.
  - **Overall GPA** – The overall GPA is based on the last 30 credits of study (or 27-29 for students with fewer credits). For a freshman student, this will likely be grades from the first two semesters at Towson. For sophomores or juniors, we do not use your cumulative GPA. Instead we calculate a GPA based on the last 30 credits that were completed, including transfer credits. Transfer students will have their overall GPA calculated similarly from their transfer school. The minimum overall GPA that will be considered for admission into the major is 2.50.
  - **Prerequisite GPA**- We calculate a separate GPA for the 5 prerequisite classes. If you retake one of these classes, we will use the higher grade. In addition, if you take more than one Category A or B class, we will use the highest grade. Realize that any prerequisite class taken within the last 30 credits of study counts double in the GPA calculations. That is, if you take BIOL 190 in the spring semester before admission into the major, it counts in the prerequisite GPA AND the overall GPA. If its exam time and you're trying to figure out which courses to emphasize in your study time, focus on the prerequisite courses. The minimum Prerequisite GPA that will be considered for admission into the program is 2.80.

- **If Towson accepted my transfer classes, do you still need an official copy of my transcript from the other university?**

- Yes. Often the transfer credit report does not tell us when you took the classes. **Since we look at the most recent classes, we need to see the transcript so we can see which grades are most recent.**

- **Can you show me an example of how the ranking GPA is calculated?**

- Amy Audiology and Samantha Speech are both trying to get into the major. Amy is a sophomore and Samantha is a freshman. Here are their grades from last year. At first glance, their grades look similar, but they're not.

| Amy Audiology |              |    | Samantha Speech |              |    |
|---------------|--------------|----|-----------------|--------------|----|
| Fall          | DFST 207 (3) | B  | Fall            | ENGL 102 (3) | B+ |
| Fall          | SOCI 101 (3) | A- | Fall            | MATH 115 (3) | A- |
| Fall          | PHYS 202 (4) | B+ | Fall            | SOCI 101 (3) | C+ |
| Fall          | SPPA 101 (3) | A  | Fall            | SPPA 101 (3) | A  |
| Fall          | HLTH 221 (3) | B- | Fall            | PSYC 101 (3) | B- |
| Spring        | FMST 223 (3) | A  | Spring          | BIOL 190 (4) | C  |
| Spring        | FMST 220 (3) | B+ | Spring          | ANTH 207 (3) | B+ |
| Spring        | DFST 208 (3) | A  | Spring          | DFST 104 (3) | A  |
| Spring        | PSYC 212 (4) | A- | Spring          | HLTH 101 (3) | A  |
|               |              |    | Spring          | DFST 101 (3) | B  |

Here is how their grades were calculated for SPPA admission:

| Amy Audiology   | Samantha Speech  |
|---|--|
| Last 30 Credits: 3.51   | Last 30 Credits: 3.19  |
| Prerequisite Courses: 3.06<br>ENGL 102 B<br>MATH 109 A-<br>PSYC 101 B+<br>BIOL 190 C<br>SOCI 101 A- | Prerequisite GPA: 2.94<br>ENGL 102 B+<br>MATH 115 A-<br>PSYC 101 B-<br>BIOL 190 C<br>ANTH 207 B+ |
| <b>Admissions GPA: 3.29</b>   | <b>Admissions GPA: 3.07</b>  |

Amy's final ranking is 3.29, Samantha's is 3.07. Notice that Samantha took both ANTH 207 and SOCI 101. Similarly Amy took PHYS 212 and SOCI 101. The higher of those two grades was used to calculate the prerequisite GPA. Also notice that Amy and Samantha were almost identical on their prerequisite grades. However, Amy's overall GPA for the last 30 credits was much higher, giving her the advantage.

- **How many Students Get into the Major each Year?**

- We accept 70 students each year into the SPPA major. Those 70 students are called a “cohort.” Each cohort consists of sophomores, juniors, and even a few seniors.

- **How many Students Try to Get into the Major each Year?**

- The number of pre-major students varies from year to year. In the past 3 years, it has ranged from 100 to 120 pre-major students who were minimally qualified to get into the major. That is, the students had an overall 30 credit GPA of 2.5 or better, and prerequisite GPA of 2.8 or better. Students with lower grades are dropped from the process and not admitted.

- **What GPA Do I Need to Get into the Major?**

- It varies from year to year depending on how many students apply, and what their grades are. ***As a rule of thumb, students with a ranking GPA of 3.0 or below never get into the major.*** Students with a ranking GPA of 3.5 or better have made it into the major each year, although this could change in the future if we have an unusually competitive year. The group that isn’t clear-cut are students who rank between 3.0 and 3.5. In the last few years the cut-off has been in the 3.2 range or higher. The higher your grades, the better your chances.

- **I don’t think I’m going to make it into the SPPA major. What classes should I take next fall?**

- Premajors register for fall semester SPPA classes with the assumption that they will make it into the major. However, if your GPA is below 3.0, you will not be allowed to register for the fall SPPA classes. Instead, you need to sign up for alternative “Plan B” classes. That is, what will your major be if you don’t ever get into SPPA? Sign up for fall classes that will move you towards the new major. If you do get into the SPPA major, then we will make sure that you are put into the necessary fall SPPA classes and you can drop “Plan B.” If your GPA is “iffy” but is above a 3.0, then you also should think about “Plan B.” That is, look up information about a potential Plan B major, and sign up for both SPPA courses and courses in the Plan B major for the fall.

- **When will I find out if I’m accepted?**

- We start the admissions process as soon as spring grades are posted and usually finish the process by mid-June. Decision letters are mailed to your home address. You will have 2 weeks to tell us that you want your spot in the program.

- **What if I’m not admitted into the SPPA major?**

- Students who are not admitted are dis-enrolled from fall semester SPPA courses. Students then have two options, try again, or find a new major. If you are in this situation, consider the following factors:  
(1) When do you want to graduate? Freshmen can try again and still graduate on time. Sophomores and Juniors who try again will take longer than 4 years to

complete the degree. From entry into SPPA major classes until completion takes 2 to 2 ½ years.

- (2) Can you improve your GPA? If there were outside factors that pulled down your GPA, or if you know you can do better, then think about trying again. However, if you were doing your best and still didn't make it into the program, you should think strongly about another major.

- **What should I do if I didn't make it into the major and want to try again?**

- If you want to retry, please notify the department so we can add your name to the pre-major list for the following year and keep you with your advisor.

- **How do I officially change my major?**

- If you decide to change your major, go into Peoplesoft and change your major in the system at this website: <http://www.towson.edu/registrar/changingmajor.asp>

- **How and when do I register for SPPA classes?**

- Register for SPPA classes like all other classes, through PeopleSoft. All SPPA courses are automatically set up with pre-requisite checking. This means the system will check to see that you are an SPPA major and that you take classes in the required sequence. As a pre-major, you will be able to register for the first year fall SPPA classes if you have a GPA of 3.0 or higher; however if you are not admitted into the major, you will be dropped from the classes during the summer and will need to register for other courses. Registration for classes is based on class status. Specifically, Seniors go first, then Juniors, Sophomores, and finally Freshmen. Class status is based on the number of completed credits, not including the courses you are currently taking. For example, a student who completed 27 credits, and is currently taking 15 credits of classes, would register with Freshmen because the current 15 credits don't count. Students with priority registration (athletes, students with documented disabilities, honors students) can register sooner than students without priority registration. General university registration dates are listed on-line at <http://www.towson.edu/registrar/calendars/registrationdates.asp>

- **What if I decide NOT to take a course that is listed on my program of study?**

- If you do not sign up for a required course with your cohort, we cannot guarantee a seat for you the next time the class is taught because students in the cohort behind you get priority to schedule.

- **How do I find out who my advisor is?**

Freshmen have a First Year Experience (FYE) Advisor who is assigned by the university. PSPA majors are also assigned a department advisor by the department after the Pre-Major Application form is submitted. The name of your advisor should be available in Peoplesoft. If you do not have an advisor listed, contact the department to find out who your advisor is. There is

sometimes a delay of a week or so between the completion of the Pre-Major Application form and your assignment to an advisor, so please wait at least a week after completing the paperwork before calling the department. If you have a First Year Experience (FYE) Advisor, you will need to meet with both your department advisor AND FYE Advisor. Your department advisor will send an email or other notice that it's time to sign up for advising. If you do not hear from your advisor and know that your registration date is soon, be pro-active and contact him/her yourself.

- **I can't register for classes because it says I have an advising hold, how do I fix this?**

- Your advisor has to lift your advising hold after you attend an advising session. (Note that if you have a hold that is from the bursar's office or health center, you need to contact them to resolve the issue). If you met with your advisor and were assigned special permission to take SPPA classes, you have two choices. (1) Contact your advisor and ask them to lift the hold, or (2) Contact the Main Office and ask to lift the hold. Be sure to tell us your name and TU number. If you never met with your advisor, you need to make an appointment to do so before you will be allowed to register for classes. The department will contact your advisor to confirm that you have met with him/her.

- **What should I bring to my advising sessions?**

Before the advising session, print a copy of your Academic Requirements Report and a copy of your unofficial transcript or bring a laptop, tablet or other smart device open to your Academic Requirements Report. Review the report to determine what SPPA classes you need and what Core Requirements need to be completed. In addition, be aware of additional requirements such as 32 credits of 300+ level courses, and 120 credits total. Write out your 4-year degree plan for the next semester and through graduation using the Program of Study (POS) form available on the department website and bring it to the advising session. During the Advising Session, be prepared to discuss your plans for next semester and future semesters. Determine a "Plan B" in case you don't get into certain classes. At the end of your session, your advisor will lift your advising hold, which will allow you to register for classes. Remember, your faculty advisor may write one of your graduate school recommendation letters. Impress them by being well prepared for your meeting.

- **I have a job or family situation that conflicts with the only open section of a class I need to take. How can I get into the closed section?**

- You don't. It's your decision whether to take the class or not. We will only change student sections for these reasons: (1) Medical- for those who have documentation that indicates they cannot take a section for medical reasons; (2) Religion- for those who cannot be in class at a certain time for religious reasons (documentation required); and (3) Class Conflict- for double majors whose class in another major conflicts with the assigned SPPA section. Students must be

enrolled in the other major in Peoplesoft, and bring a copy of their schedule showing enrollment in the conflicting class. In addition, the department will check to make sure the student REMAINS enrolled in the conflicting class. Students who drop the conflicting class will be moved back to their previously assigned section. If you need to change sections for one of these three reasons, contact the department and bring your documentation.

- **I finished all of my Core Requirement Classes and Major Classes, what else can I take?**

- If you are a freshman or sophomore, consider taking additional classes to finish another major, or minor. Many SPPA students are successful double majors or minors with Deaf Studies, Psychology, Family Studies, or Health Sciences. Many states require Special Education courses for permanent teaching certification. We highly recommend that all of our students take SPED 301 for that reason. If you are good at languages, complete a major or minor in Foreign Languages. Bilingual professionals command sign-on bonuses in some areas of the country. In addition, consider how other classes will broaden your knowledge in ways that can be applied back to audiology or speech language pathology. A list of recommended “extra” classes is listed at the end of this manual. Finally, why not take a class just because it is interesting to you? This may be the last time in your life when you have time to try a Drama class, Pottery, or learn some French poetry.

- **I’m concerned about .....my class, instructor, grade, advisor, all of the above, none of the above; what should I do?**

- If you have a concern about a particular class, instructor, or advisor, the department’s policy is that you first need to meet with the faculty member. (However, if the situation involves discrimination or sexual harassment, immediately contact the Department Chairperson). For all other issues, it is your choice to bring the issue to the faculty member during the semester, or wait until grades are posted. After communicating with her/him, if the situation is not resolved, you can bring the concern to the Department Chair. You must put your concern in writing, attach any relevant documentation, and sign and date the letter. The Chair will check with the faculty member involved to make sure you communicated with them first. The Chair will then review your concerns and determine how to handle the situation. If you are appealing a grade, the information will be given to a committee consisting of the Department Chair and Program Directors. They will review the case and may ask you to come to a meeting to answer questions. They may separately interview the faculty member. If the committee does not agree with your appeal, you have the right to appeal to the Dean of the College of Health Professions. The Department Chair will guide you in that process if you need to appeal to the next level.

- **Can I re-take an SPPA class if I do poorly?**

- You must earn a C or better in all classes required for the major. This includes SPPA classes, and other major requirements such as PSYC 212, and BIOL 221. Each Biology course can only be taken a maximum of 3 times (example: take it the first time, then retake it twice). Students who need to retake a SPPA class need to get permission during the advising process. Realize that the cohort coming behind you has priority. If too many students retake a particular class, we don't have enough seats for the cohort coming up behind. When that occurs, we remove "retake" students from the class. We review the situation of each "retake" student to determine who should be removed. Students whose previous grades were below a 2.0 have priority over students whose previous grades were higher, because they must raise their grade to graduate (i.e., a student with a D will have priority for retaking over a student with a C, C+, or B-). Number of credits completed will also be considered. Students who are closer to graduation will have priority for retaking classes over students with fewer credits.

- **Can I take a required class with the Pass/Fail option or audit one of the classes?**

- No, all required classes, including classes outside of the department such as PSYC 212 and BIOL 221 must be taken with a regular grading system.

- **Can I take SPPA classes ahead of schedule?**

- The answer is, no there is no room to allow students to take classes ahead of their assigned cohort schedule. SPPA classes are taken in the assigned semester by the 70 students in each cohort. The cohort ahead of you, combined with a few students who need to retake classes, completely fill each section of the class. Realize that cohort scheduling insures that you WILL finish all requirements and graduate on time, but it also makes it impossible to speed up the course sequence.

- **Can I graduate early?**

- Maybe. If you start in the major as a freshman, and begin the major classes as a sophomore, you might be able to graduate one semester early after the fall of your senior year. In order to do this, you must complete all of the required SPPA classes, all required Core Curriculum classes, 120 total credits, and 32 credits of 300-400 level courses. Please discuss these plans with your advisor.

- **Can I be a part-time SPPA major?**

- Students can progress through the major on a part-time basis; however, classes are not scheduled in a way that caters to part-time students. In addition, students cannot take classes ahead of their cohort assignment. If you need to go part-time, please make sure your advisor and the main office knows so we can calculate class sizes correctly.

- **I need to take a semester off, what should I do?**

- Occasionally family, health, financial, or other reasons dictate that you need to sit out a semester, or more. If this occurs, let your advisor know, and notify the main office. Let us know when you expect to return so we can plan for you at that time. In addition, there are steps you need to take with the university to inform them that you are taking a semester off.

- **What classes do I have to take to complete the major?**

- The program of study is listed on the department website and in the undergraduate catalog..

- **Can I do study abroad if I major in SPPA? When could I go?**

- Yes. This should be planned with your advisor. The best time to plan for a semester abroad is minimester or summer; however, if you declared the SPPA major in your freshman year and entered the program as a sophomore, then you have time to do a semester abroad during the regular semesters. This must be carefully planned so as not to delay your graduation.

- **Are major classes offered during the summer or minimester?**

- A limited number of classes are offered during the summer and minimester. For example, SPPA 310 Introduction to Stuttering, which can count as the 3-credit SPPA elective class, is only offered during summer and minimester. DFST 104, American Sign Language I, is also offered in the summer. Check the Towson University schedule of classes and speak with your advisor about the possibility of taking summer and minimester classes. **The required courses for the major are only offered during fall or spring semesters.**

