PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

M.Sc Language Pathology

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Language Pathology
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5104
6	Programme Accreditation	This programme leads to the award of a degree which is accepted as a professional qualification by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists. Graduates of the programme are entitled apply for registration with the Health Professions Council.
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Health Care Programmes
8	FHEQ Level	Masters
9	Date written/revised	28.5.2010

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10   Programme Aims

1. To provide students with academic and clinical knowledge and skills that meets the approval criteria of the Health Professions Council for registration of graduates for employment as Speech and Language Therapists and the guidelines for Speech and Language Therapy programmes set out by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists;

2. To provide a route by which appropriately qualified high calibre graduates can gain a license to practise as speech and language therapists.

3. To foster a synergy between research and teaching

4. To ensure that teaching provision meets the changing need of employers

5. To develop and improve students' ability to work both independently and in teams; to use initiative and solve problems; and to prioritise work and meet deadlines.

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11   Learning Outcomes

For students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skills which reflect the QAA benchmarks for speech and language therapy and the Health Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency for speech and language therapy.

Knowledge and Understanding

A Knowledge and Understanding (see section C in Health Care/Speech and Language Therapy Benchmark Statement).

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate:

A1 An in-depth understanding of current knowledge of the causes, symptomatology and consequences of the range of human communication disorders and the clinical skills necessary for effective intervention practice.

A2 Research abilities that will allow graduates to build the knowledge base of a relatively recent discipline and to meet employers' need for graduates able to validly evaluate clinical service provision.

A3 The conceptual tools to enable them to effectively adapt to advances in theory and developments in clinical practice throughout their working lives. These include relevant knowledge from the disciplines of linguistics, psychology, biological sciences, education and social theory, and the ability to apply this knowledge effectively.

A4 The knowledge and skills to act as advocates for their profession and the population they will serve as speech and language therapists.

A5 Awareness of legislations, statutory codes and policy affecting speech and language therapy practice across health, social care and education contexts.

Teaching and Learning Methods

A1 Knowledge base and clinical goals are set for both years of the programme. The first year comprises a number of foundation and language pathology modules. These employ lectures, practical classes, and case-based problem solving exercises. In the second year, more complex problems are set in language pathology. Clinical placements initially take place on the university site, and introduce that the problem-solving framework (in line with language pathology lecture courses). At later stages placements become more varied in service delivery and the populations served. Blocks of clinical experience in both summers help to prepare students for the workplace and to develop the full-range of skills required to register for a licence to practice.

A2 Research skills taught are specific to speech and language therapy, with an emphasis on clinical effectiveness.

A3 The programme will prepare students to respond to the rapidly changes in the knowledge base and policy of service delivery that affect the profession. The preparation is delivered through case based problem solving (CBPS) exercises, experiential exercises, heavy emphasis on reflective practice and critical evaluation. All these aspects are specified in marking criteria and made explicit for students in all areas of assessment.

A4 & 5 Awareness of the professional context in which speech and language therapists work, current issues, and relevant legislation and requirements are promoted through team working, peer assessment, interprofessional workshops, service user engagement, as well as more traditional methods such as tutorials, and peer learning.

Assessment Strategy

A1& 3 Foundation knowledge is assessed through essays, exercises and reports. Practical skills (e.g, phonetics) are examined by practical examination, as well as team reports and verbal presentations on researched topics. CBPS teaching is assessed by written case management plans and other assignments, students' clinical competencies are measured through clinical evaluation reports, clinical viva voce examinations, written case reports, observation of videotaped sessions, an 'unseen' video exam and input from clinical educators on performance throughout the placement.

A2 Written examinations assess statistical concepts and data analysis abilities in year 2. Research abilities are further assessed by an 'Extended Case Report' which is an independent piece of clinical effectiveness research.

A4 & 5 Where relevant, professional aspects are assessed in reflective learning logs, clinical case reports, case presentations, clinical vivas, and an 'unseen' exam. In addition, students submit a 'professional issues' folder at the beginning of year 2; this is a piece of group work resulting where students undertake collaborative research on current legislation and policy and apply it to speech and language therapy service delivery.

Intellectual Skills

Subject-specific/professional skills (see sections A & B in Health Care/Speech and Language Therapy Benchmark Statement)

On completing the programme students should have the:
B1 Ability to make appropriate case management decisions for developmental and acquired

disorders of communication, justifying those decisions theoretically.

B2 Clinical competence to provide intervention for developmental and acquired disorders of communication using evidence-based practice

B3 Ability to objectively and routinely evaluate clinical effectiveness

B4 The ability to critically evaluate service provision policy

B5 The ability to evaluate new research and techniques that become available, and apply these appropriately in working practice.

B6 Develop effective interpersonal skills and be able to reflect on their own interpersonal communication and its effect on colleagues from all disciplines and clients and their families. Demonstrate the ability to form and maintain egalitarian relationships with colleagues and clients as the bedrock for clinical work.

Teaching and Learning Methods

B1 Core speech and language pathology subjects are presented using a case-based problem-solving approach. Students plan case management in classroom exercises and are required to use the same format in their clinical practice placements, enhancing the links between theory and clinical practice. This is reinforced via the e-learning resource, the e-portfolio.

B2 All case management decisions, including choice of intervention approach must be justified with reference to theoretical and clinical literature in both classroom exercises and clinical practice placements.

B3 & 5 Research skills, including evaluation, are taught throughout the programme. Students are required to evaluate clinical effectiveness in every case they treat, to ensure they have the research skills necessary for clinical practice (e.g. for quality assurance).

B4 Each case management plan requires justified decisions concerning service delivery. The group treatment placement in semester 1, year 2 requires students to evaluate an aspect of service provision in an SLT service. A mixture of workshops and self-directed learning develops students' ability to deal with professional issues.

B6 Students practise and are given feedback on appropriate interpersonal skills for each of their clinical placements. Awareness of interprofessional working is formally promoted in two ways: firstly, *The Educational Setting and Literacy* module, taught in year 1, involves lectures given by education professionals (teacher, educational psychologist) and focuses on working within an education context; secondly, joint sessions with students doing the Clinical Psychology programme at Newcastle University are being developed (so far sessions have taken place on 'giving presentations', and 'evaluating a service'). Interprofessional working is integrated into all clinical placement learning through the Intended Learning Outcomes/clinical competencies.

Assessment Strategy

B1 Students are required to complete 6 case management plans as major pieces of assessed work over in years 1 and 2 of the programme, as well as 2 case reports on clients seen on clinical placement.

B2 All student clinical placements are assessed by the clinical educator, who indicates whether students have mastered specific competencies set for each year of the programme. Students and clinical educators agree personal clinical goals to ensure that students input to and monitor the development of the necessary competencies.

B3 Block clinical placements are also assessed by students presenting a case they have treated in a *viva voce* examination. Students must demonstrate the ability to use an appropriate clinical effectiveness design. The 'Extended Case Report', completed during year 2, assesses students' ability carry out an evaluation of intervention with a single case, and is presented as a research report.

B4 Students submit a group treatment folder in semester 1, year 2, comparing group and individual service delivery in relation to a case they have treated. Awareness of service delivery issues are also assessed through the professional issues portfolio, submitted at the beginning of year 2.

B6 Interpersonal skills and awareness of interprofessional working are assessed through clinical educator reports (see B2 above) and case presentations. Awareness of issues relevant to working with education professionals is assessed either through the group presentation or essay as part of the *Educational Setting and Literacy* module.

Practical Skills

Cognitive skills (see section C in Health Care Benchmark Statement)
The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate:
C1 The ability to search for information efficiently and effectively
C2 The ability to critically evaluate arguments and evidence
C3 The ability to encapsulate complex theoretical positions, drawing conclusions
C4 The ability to identify problems and develop strategies for their resolution

Teaching and Learning Methods

C1 CBPS learning requires students to seek information

C2 & 3 Planning case management requires students to weigh evidence, then make decision that can be explicitly justified. Given the contradictory nature of the literature on many aspects of communication pathology, students must learn to critique evidence to draw conclusions.

C4 In the second year of the course, the problems set become more complex.

Assessment Strategy

C1, 2, 3. All assessed CBPS assignments. Also, essays set for modules in year 1 require seeking and evaluating information.

C4 A number of assessments tap students ability identify problems and develop strategies for their resolution: The Audiology Case Management Plan (Stage 3), the Extended Case Report and the 'unseen' video examination.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should have:
D1 Effective communication and interpersonal skills

D2 IT skills

D3 The ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines

D4 The ability to work both independently and in teams

D5 The ability to use initiative and solve problems

Teaching and Learning Methods

D1 Verbal presentations, tutorials and case presentations, participating in CBPS group learning, clinical placements.

D2 Students receive information from lecturers via email, seek information through the internet and on-line journal facilities, and use phonetic and language analysis equipment.

D3 & 4 The CBPS part of the course encourages self-directed learning, student groups negotiate individual research tasks, integrate information, discuss findings. Students work together to provide intensive treatment to individual clients in year 1 and to plan and deliver group treatment in year 2.

D5 CBPS exercises and clinical practicum promote initiative taking and problem solving

Assessment Strategy
D1 Case presentations.
D2 Written assignments, bibliographies, clinical equipment, use of Powerpoint in verbal presentations, clinical linguistics and phonetics assessment.
D3 Penalties are in place for assessments that are submitted late. Penalties are also in place if client confidentiality is breached. This penalty applies to both written and verbal assessment. Students are required to be well prepared for clinical sessions when on placement and write reports and/or produce other materials at the required time.
D4 The Professional Issues assessment (Policy Impact Assessment at service level, caseload level and client level) is produced through group collaboration and all students in the group receive the same mark.
D5 Both CBPS and clinical practicum are assessed throughout the programme.

12   **Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**
Basic structure of the programme
The programme is studied over two calendar years full time (including notional third semesters in the Summer). Each year requires the study of compulsory modules with a credit value of 180. A 10 credit module consists of 100 hours of student effort, including lectures, tutorials, practicals, CBPS group work, private study, completion of coursework and revision. Modules can vary in size from 5 to 40 credits. Block clinical placements exceed the 10 credit point =100hours equation. The tables below shows the structure of the programme:

Code	Module [1]	Credits	Semester
Year 1			
SPE8102	Anatomy of Speech and Language	10	1-2
SPE8101	Physiology of Speech and Language	10	1
SPE8106	Support for Clinical Practice	10	1-2
SPE8105	Clinical Practice	40	1-2-3
SPE8104	Cases	30	1-2
SPE8107	Normal Language and Development	40	1-2
SPE8103	Phonetics I	15	1-2
SPE8108	Psychology of Language and Cognitive Processes	15	1
SPE8109	The Educational Setting and Literacy	10	2
Year 2			
SPE8201	Professional Issues	10	Induction
SPE8208	Research Methods	5	1
SPE8203	Clinical Practice	30	1-3
SPE8205	Extended Case Report	30	2-3
SPE8210	Phonetics II	20	1-2
SPE8206	Bilingualism	5	1
SPE8207	Abnormal Psychology and Counselling	5	1
SPE8204	Dysphagia	10	1
SPE8202	Clinical Neurology	10	1
SPE8209	Intensives: Voice/Dysfluency/Laryngectomy	15	2
SPE8211	Cases: Exceptional Development	25	1-2
SPE8212	Cases: Motor-Anatomic/Pragmatic-Discourse	15	1-2

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
Clinical Practice
Overview of MSc placements and clinical assessments

Module	semester	Clinic	Assessment
SPE8105	1	Taught clinical module with with video-case-based observational work. (6 sessions in total of highly clinically related content)	Reflective Log on Interpersonal Communication (15%) Case Management Plan (15%)
	2	Half-day child or adult clinic (12 sessions) [1]	Case Report (15%) Clinical evaluation report (15%)
	3	6-week block placement (child/adult/mixed) (5 days/week) [2]	Case presentation (30%) Clinical evaluation report (10%)
SPE8205	2	Extended Case Study (10 sessions) [2] (submitted semester 3)	Extended Case Report (100%)
SPE8203	1	Half-day group therapy (child or adult group) (12 sessions) [1,2]	Clinical evaluation report (20%)
	3	6-week block placement (child/adult/mixed) (5 days/week) [2]	Case Presentation (30%) Clinical evaluation report (20%) Unseen case assessment (30%)

[1] Campus Clinics
[2] Community Clinics

Total practical: 160 sessions PLUS Clinical Induction and Professional Issues; RCSLT requirements: 150 sessions (100 under supervision, 50 clinically related sessions).

The learning outcomes are shown in Appendix A (MOFS).

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme

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13   Criteria for admission

Graduates
At least an upper second degree, usually in Psychology, Linguistics or Bio-Medical Science.

Appropriate work experience is required, e.g. speech and language therapy assistant or special needs classroom assistant.

Overseas students
Appropriate degree level overseas qualifications will be considered. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists/ Health Professions Council requires IELTS examination an average score of at least 8 with no mark in any component of the test below 7.5.

Admissions policy
Short listed students attend a selection day. All prospective students participate in two problem-solving exercises and give a presentation as part of the selection procedure. Our interviews are conducted by the Degree Programme Director or other academic staff member and local speech and language therapy managers from the North East region. Students from outside Europe are generally interviewed by telephone by the Degree Programme Director.

We screen all prospective candidates at interviews for team working (collaborative problem solving and interpersonal communication) and for the depth and breadth of understanding of their speech and language therapy related experience.

14	Support for Student Learning

Induction
MSc students have a two week induction period at the beginning of both academic years of their programme. These induction periods are delivered by the Degree Programme Director and other relevant staff members.   The focus of the first induction period is to introduce learning philosophy and techniques that will be useful on the programme (individual learning styles, team working and team learning, problem-based learning and case-based enquiry). The aim is to support the cohort to develop as a team and the main focus is to provide formative learning experiences that are closely linked to the type of learning style and outputs on the programme. They are given opportunity to practice writing a report and giving an oral presentation and formative feedback is provided to all students on an individual basis before the end of the induction period. In some cases recommendations to the academic writing centre can be made, or general advice on study skills like proof reading and structuring scientific writing.

In addition new students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/international)

Study skills support
Students will learn a range of personal transferable skills, including study skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Wider study skills support exists within the University and students can access this directly and/or be signposted to it.

Academic support
The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their personal tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support
All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.htm

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support
In addition the Degree Programme Director can provide pastoral support to any student in the cohorts.

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University, and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/facilities

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other

languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See http://ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/international/into

15	Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Programme Audit Group (PAG) and reported to the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies and also by more informal discussions between the students/student reps and the Degree Programme Director at various intervals throughout the academic year. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations
All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Module feedback is sought for each module via on-line questionnaires. Students are encouraged to attend a set session to provide feedback, to ensure a high return rate. Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Board of studies
- Staff-Student Committee
- Programme Strategy Group (PSG)
- Programme Audit Group (PAG)
- Clinical Co-ordinators Committee (CCC)
- Clinical Education Committee (CEC)
- Student Practical Experience Committee (Employers panel)
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
- University Teaching and Learning Committee

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience
- Student Evaluation questionnaires
- PG Student forum
- Student representative on Board of Studies, PAG and CCC
- Discussion with Degree Programme Director

16	Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes).

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/information/contact/regs.htm) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. (As all modules for this programme are core and compulsory, compensation is not permitted, as per examination convention M. 36c.

Progression from Year 1 to Year 2
If a student fails a clinical placement in year 1 of the MSc programme the decision about progression to year 2 of the degree is made on a case-by-case basis by the Degree Programme Director.

Indicators of Quality and Standards:

- Accreditation by RCSLT (2001). **Course approved by the Health Professions Council (2006).** QAA Subject Review: 24/24 (2000); **2006.**
- Graduate employment statistics – high based on comparison with comparator Universities even in times of a lack of posts for newly-qualified therapists in the NHS (information gained via attendance of head of section at the National HE group for SLT programmes (CREST) as well as gathering information directly from students via e-mail on their employment status and comparing with national statistics.
- Satisfactory internal subject reviews.

Common Marking Scheme

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes		Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes	
<50	Fail	<50	Fail
50-59	Pass	50 or above	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit		
70 or above	Pass with Distinction		

We have developed specific marking criteria for many individual pieces of assessment that maps onto the common marking scheme. These criteria are related specifically to the requirements of the assessment and refer to generic intellectual skills (i.e., knowledge, ethics, analysis, synthesis, application) and curriculum specific content (i.e, paediatric communication difficulties, audiological analysis etc).

Determination of Degree Performance

Award of the MSc and licence to practice is dependent on all assessments being passed satisfactorily. Marks will be aggregated to give overall marks for each module. Total aggregate mark across all modules, taking into account credit weightings, will then be calculated

(excluding any module for which there is pass/fail grade only). An MSc at Distinction will be awarded when this comes to 70% or above. An MSc at Merit will be awarded where the aggregate mark is between 60 and 69%. The Board of Examiners retains the right to use discretion to award a Distinction in circumstances where the overall average is under 70%, but performance is outstanding in significant areas which we have traditionally rated as the extended case study and performance on the clinical practice modules.

Role of the External Examiner
Two External Examiners, who are distinguished members of the subject community, are appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:
      See and approve examination papers
      Moderate examination and coursework marking
      Attend the Board of Examiners
      Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/requests)

The School brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (All Core and Compulsory)
A1	**SPE8104, SPE8108, SPE8109, SPE8105,**
A2	SPE8208, SPE8104, SPE8205, SPE8206
A3	SPE8102, SPE8101, SPE8107, SPE8103, SPE8108, SPE8212, SPE8211, SPE8210, SPE8202, SPE8209, SPE8212, SPE8105, SPE8203, SPE8205, SPE8204
A4	SPE8202, SPE8105, SPE8203
B1	SPE8104, SPE8211, SPE8209, SPE8212, SPE8205
B2	SPE8105, SPE8203, SPE8205
B3	SPE8105, SPE8203, SPE8205
B4	SPE8202
B5	SPE8205
B6	SPE8105, SPE8203, SPE8211
C1	SPE8104, SPE8205
C2	SPE8104, SPE8211, SPE8205, SPE8207
C3	SPE8205, SPE8104, SPE8209, SPE8212
C4	SPE8211, SPE8204, SPE8212,
D1	all SPE8… modules
D2	all SPE8… modules, SPE8103, SPE8210, SPE8208
D3	all SPE8… modules
D4	SPE8202, SPE8105, SPE8211, SPE8203, SPE8103, SPE8109
D5	SPE8104, SPE8212, SPE8204, SPE8211, SPE8203, SPE8202, SPE8105