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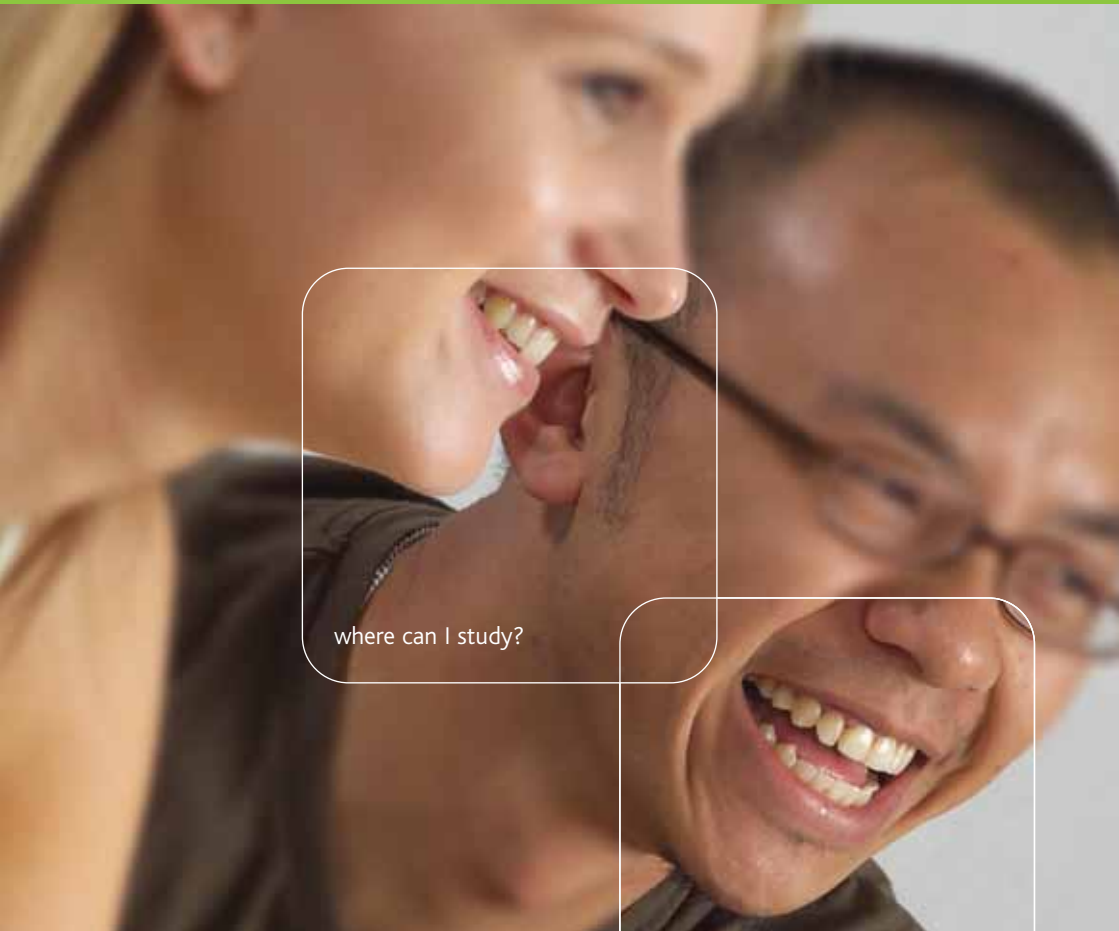
NHS careers

Tel: 0845 60 60 655

Email: advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk

Visit: www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/careers/ahp

A career in speech and language therapy



where can I study?

how do I become a therapist?



A career in speech and language therapy

Choosing a career is one of life's big decisions, so it's worth finding out as much as you can about the choices available. This booklet aims to tell you about speech and language therapy: about what speech and language therapists do, why they matter and how you can become one.

What is a speech and language therapist?



“It takes a special person to be a **speech and language therapist**, it takes someone who can listen above anything else”

Speech and language therapists are allied health professionals. They work with children and adults who have difficulties with communication, or with eating, drinking and swallowing. Speech and language therapists work closely with parents, carers and other professionals, such as teachers, nurses, occupational therapists and doctors.

There are around 10,000 practising speech and language therapists in the UK. The National Health Service employs most of these. Other therapists work for education services or charities. Some therapists work independently and treat patients privately.

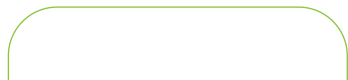
Speech and language therapists work in community health centres, hospital wards and outpatient departments, mainstream and special schools, assessment units and day centres, and in their clients' homes. Some therapists now work in courtrooms, prisons and young offenders institutions.



Who do speech and language therapists work with?

- Babies with feeding and swallowing difficulties.
- Children with communication problems because of learning difficulties, physical disabilities or both. Some of these children have difficulties in producing sounds, others cannot understand what people say to them. Some may have specific problems such as hearing impairment, stammering or autism.
- Adults with communication and/or swallowing problems. These happen after medical problems such as a stroke, or because of degenerative diseases, such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease. Some clients may have had head, neck and throat cancer or brain injury problems following a head injury.
- Individuals with mental health problems or dementia.
- Adults with problems such as stammering, learning difficulties, physical disabilities and hearing problems.
- Adults with problems that occur at work, such as teachers and singers with voice difficulties.

“speech and language issues can affect all ages...”





“speech and language therapists offer their clients a safe place...”

Case Study: **Stephen Miller**

Stephen Miller is studying speech and language therapy. “I practised as a solicitor for about 12 years but always knew I had got into the wrong thing. I wasn’t right for it and it wasn’t right for me. I also taught English as a foreign language and worked as a marriage counsellor. I chose speech and language therapy because I have always been keen on language and also felt that counselling and teaching English were relevant skills. Speech and language therapists offer their clients a safe place where speech problems are not a cause for raised eyebrows or turned away eyes. They also offer the prospect of achieving some improvement in their situation with effective intervention in a supportive environment.”

Should I become a speech and language therapist?

If you're wondering whether speech and language therapy is the career choice for you ask yourself if you:

- 1 *enjoy working with people of all ages*
- 2 *can work as part of a team*
- 3 *have good listening and communication skills*
- 4 *enjoy solving problems*
- 5 *have the capacity to study*
- 6 *want to be part of a dynamic, rapidly developing profession which draws on science, education and medicine*

It is worth visiting your local speech and language therapists. Your local health service can put you in contact with your nearest speech and language therapy service, which may organise group visits, video presentations or open evenings. Your local careers service can also provide information.



“Your local health service can put you in contact with your nearest speech and language therapy service...”



“I have a good foundation and knowledge of Asian cultures and bring this to my working practice”

Case Study: **Sunita Shah**

Sunita Shah completed her speech and language therapy course in 1999 and works as a senior specialist in bilingualism.

“I wanted a career that involved communication and working with adults and children. I also wanted to use my bilingual skills within my work. I have a good foundation and knowledge of Asian cultures and bring this to my working practice. We have a large and diverse group of clients; over half our total caseload is bilingual, and over 31 languages are spoken in the clinic. It is just as important for these clients to access the service as monolingual speakers.”



“There has not been one day since I graduated that I have regretted my choice of career”

Case Study: **Marion Jones**

Marion Jones works in a specialist unit attached to a mainstream school.

“I trained as a speech and language therapist five years ago. I was a mature student, having spent a number of years previously as a speech and language therapy assistant. I wanted to be certain that speech and language therapy was the right career choice for me. There has not been one day since I graduated that I have regretted my choice of career. I work in a language unit attached to a mainstream school and enjoy delivering training to parents, teachers and others about what we do and how they can help the children in their care.”

How do I become a speech and language therapist?

All speech and language therapists must complete a recognised three- or four-year degree course and register with a body called the Health Professions Council (www.hpc-uk.org) before being able to practise.

The courses combine academic study and practice/clinical placements. Most courses require three A-level passes or five Scottish highers as minimum entry qualifications. Some courses require specific GCSE and A-levels, such as English and biology, so check the entry requirements with each university.

Many courses welcome applications from suitably-qualified mature students. Evidence of recent study may be required. If you already have an honours or equivalent degree, you can enter a two-year postgraduate qualifying course. Subjects in related fields (for example, psychology, social sciences and linguistics) are often preferred.

Overseas applicants should have an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 7.5, with no section below grade 7.

The practical components of the courses are very important. These may take place in schools, NHS hospitals and community health clinics and are designed to develop skills in the assessment and treatment of people with communication disorders.



“courses welcome applications from suitably-qualified mature students...”

How do I apply?

You can apply for undergraduate courses through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Visit: www.ucas.ac.uk for details. For postgraduate courses, contact the education establishment direct.

Speech and language therapy assistants

If you are not interested in pursuing a degree qualification at this stage, opportunities also exist to work as speech and language therapy assistants or bilingual co-workers. They work with qualified therapists, for example by supporting clients to develop communication skills or by developing and preparing therapy materials. There are no formal educational or age requirements, although relevant skills, experience or qualifications from other areas can be beneficial. Training is often given on the job and you may have the chance to complete an NVQ or BTEC qualification, or even a foundation degree course.



“opportunities also exist to work as speech and language therapy assistants or bilingual co-workers...”





“I feel I am introducing and supporting new ways of working with families to prevent future speech and language difficulties”

Case Study: Emma Cahill

Emma Cahill qualified nine years ago and is the manager of a Sure Start programme.

“As corny as it sounds I am actually doing the job that I always hoped to be doing – working with a great team to help very young children and their parents. I manage a team of therapists and assistants and our focus is on prevention of problems and early intervention. I feel I am introducing and supporting new ways of working with families to prevent future speech and language difficulties. Parents are very aware of their child’s difficulties and look to us for ideas and confidence. I enjoy being flexible and creative in my work and I encourage the whole team to act on their ideas.”

The right course for me

There are 16 universities and colleges in the UK offering recognised speech and language therapy courses:

The University of Central England, Birmingham

School of Speech and Language Therapy

BSc (Hons) in Speech and Language Therapy: full time: 3 years, part time: over 6 years

Tel: 0121 331 6384

Visit: www.uce.ac.uk

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

Centre for Speech and Language Therapy Studies

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

Tel: 02920 416889

Visit: www.uwic.ac.uk

Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh

Speech and Hearing Sciences

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

Graduate Diploma Speech and Language Therapy: 2 years

Tel: 0131 317 3772

Visit: www.qmuc.ac.uk

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Department of Speech and Language Therapy

BSc/BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Pathology: 4 years

Tel: 0141 950 3451

Visit: www.strath.ac.uk/slt

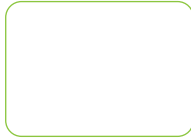
Leeds Metropolitan University

Speech and Language Therapy

BSc (Hons) Clinical Language Sciences (Speech and Language Therapy): 3 years

Tel: 0113 283 2600

Visit: www.leedsmet.ac.uk



DeMontfort University, Leicester

Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

BSc (Hons) Human Communication (Speech and Language Therapy): 3.5 years

Tel: 0116 257 7710

Visit: www.dmu.ac.uk

City University, London

Department of Language and Communication Sciences

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

PgDip/MSc in Speech and Language Therapy: 2 years

Tel: 020 7040 4194

Visit: www.city.ac.uk/lcs

University College London

Department of Human Communication Science

BSc (Hons) Speech Sciences: 4 years

MSc Speech and Language Sciences: 2 years

Tel: 020 7679 4202

Visit: www.ucl.ac.uk/hcs

Manchester Metropolitan University

Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology

BSc (Hons) Speech Pathology and Therapy: 3 years and 1 term

BSc (Hons) Psychology and Speech Pathology: 4 years

Tel: 0161 247 2553

Visit: www.mmu.ac.uk/courses

University of Manchester

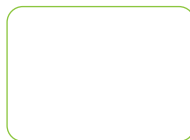
Faculty of Education

Human Communication and Deafness Group

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

Tel: 0161 275 3366

Visit: www.hcd.man.ac.uk



University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

Speech and Language Sciences Section

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Sciences: 4 years

MSc Language Pathology: 2 years

Tel: 0191 222 7388 Visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/

University of East Anglia

School of Allied Health Professions

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 3 years

Tel: 01603 593891 Visit: www.uea.ac.uk

College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth

Human Communication Studies

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 3 years

Tel: 01752 636700 Visit: www.marjon.ac.uk

University of Reading

School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

BSc Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

MSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 2 years

Tel: 0118 931 8141 Visit: www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/cl/slals/index.htm

University of Sheffield

Department of Human Communication Sciences

B MedSci (Hons) (Speech): 4 years

M MedSci (Clinical Communication Studies): 2 years

Tel: 0114 282 4870 Visit: www.shef.ac.uk

University of Ulster at Jordanstown

School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy: 4 years

Tel: 028 9036 6098 Visit: www.ulster.ac.uk



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