

# SUNY BUFFALO STATE

## DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

### Proficiency in English/Other Languages

Consistent with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the graduate program in speech-language pathology at SUNY Buffalo State believes that all individuals, whether clients, students, or professionals, speak with an accent and/or dialect (ASHA, 1998b), and that all students and professionals should know that there is no single standard that can be appropriately applied in every clinical interaction; that variation is the norm. The program, therefore, embraces cultural and linguistic diversity and provides the necessary supports to individuals who are nonnative speakers of American English.

#### Applicants:

Consistent with the policy of the **Graduate School at SUNY Buffalo State**, applicants to the graduate program in speech-language pathology for whom English is a second language must submit a score on the *Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL; [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org))* or the *International English Language Testing System (IELTS; [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org))* as documentation of English language proficiency. Applicants with a minimum TOEFL score of 550 or above on the paper exam or 79 or above on the internet exam, or with an IELTS score greater than 6.0, may be considered for admission to the graduate program. Individuals who do not meet these minimal requirements can enroll in Buffalo State's English as a Second Language Program, <http://admissions.buffalostate.edu/esl> until such time they are able to meet the proficiency standards.

#### Enrollees:

The standards for professional certification set forth by the **Council for Clinical Certification in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (CFCC)** state that applicants for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology must "demonstrate skills in oral and written language or other forms of communication sufficient for entry into professional practice." (Standard V-A, 2014 SLP Certification Standards). To meet this standard, students enrolled in the program must demonstrate competency in Standard American English that is consistent with the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's current position statement on *Students and Professionals Who speak English with Accents and Nonstandard Dialects* (ASHA, 1998), <http://www.asha.org/policy/TR1998-00154.htm#sec1.4>. The 1998 position statement says that students and professionals in the communication sciences and disorders (CSD) professions who speak with accents and/or dialects can effectively provide speech, language, and audiological services as long as they have:

- the expected level of knowledge in normal and disordered communication,
- the expected level of diagnostic and clinical case management skills, and
- if modeling is necessary, the ability to model the target phoneme, grammatical feature, or other aspect of speech and language that characterizes the client's particular problem (ASHA, 1998a, p. 1).

It is firmly held that the impetus for and information outlined in the aforementioned document remains relevant today. See <http://www.asha.org/policy/pi2011-00324.htm> for additional information, and [www.sfsu.edu/~comdis/nnsposition.html](http://www.sfsu.edu/~comdis/nnsposition.html) for strategies to support nonnative speakers of American English who are pursuing academic and clinical education in speech-language pathology.

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##### Service Delivery in English/Other Languages:

All clinical supervisors in the SUNY Buffalo State Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic are monolingual, therefore services are provided in English. Graduate students are expected to provide services with the level of proficiency described in the previous section of this document.

When prospective clients contact the clinic for services, they are asked the language of the client as well as the language spoken in the home. When prospective clients and families have limited English proficiency, they are given the option of having an interpreter or are referred to an agency in the community (see Note below) that provides services in their native language. The clinic contracts with two interpreter agencies, the **International Institute of Buffalo** <http://www.iibuff.org/> and the **Global Interpreter Platform** and works with these agencies to ensure that clients receive quality interpreter services. In situations where the client is deaf or hearing impaired, **Deaf Access Services** <http://wnydas.org/> is utilized. The clinic hires interpreters for initial evaluations. In situations where the client speaks English, for example, in schools and other non-home settings, but speaks a different language in the home, vital documents are translated and made available to families.

Buffalo, New York is a diverse community and has recently become a destination for refugees from several countries. According to most recent U.S. Census data, the four languages spoken with the highest frequency in this community are English, Spanish, Karen (spoken mostly by individuals from Burma) and Arabic. The SUNY Buffalo State clinic documents, materials, and assessment tools are written primarily in American English. Some informational documents are available in Spanish. Interpreters and translators are contracted as needed.

Note: Monolingual speakers of Spanish and Arabic are referred to the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center.

Reference: <http://www.ppgbuffalo.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Language-2014.pdf>