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Preface

This packet was created as a supplement to the “Applying to Audiology Graduate School” guide, which can be found at: [http://saa.audiology.org/educational-opportunities/undergraduate-students](http://saa.audiology.org/educational-opportunities/undergraduate-students). This supplement is intended to provide additional, more detailed information to aid undergraduate students in writing a personal statement or statement of purpose for their graduate school application.

Please contact Jennifer Doughan Whittaker, Undergraduate Committee Chair, with any questions at [jeni.whittaker.saa@gmail.com](mailto:jeni.whittaker.saa@gmail.com).

Neither the authors nor the American Academy of Audiology are the authoritative source on graduate school applications. The best resource for admissions information is to reference the individual graduate programs’ application requirements.

*All examples provided are for the purposes of guidance only. Personal statements are intended to allow applicants an avenue to showcase themselves as unique and demonstrate their writing skills. Therefore, plagiarism is NOT beneficial and NEVER condoned.*

What is a Personal Statement?

Most programs will ask for a personal statement. It is typically required when applying for graduate programs, externships, or other academic programs. This should be a 1 - 2 page document where you talk about yourself, your clinical interests, the reason you want to be an audiologist, and why you are interested in a particular graduate program. This is not only your chance to shine, but also to reflect on how you have gotten to this point in your education and what your future goals are. Applications include many quantitative measurements and a resume, which lists and describes relevant accomplishments and experiences, but the personal statement is an opportunity to address the committee using your own voice.
Step 1: Getting Started

It may be helpful to take little bit of time for self-reflection before diving into writing. Answering the following questions out loud and informally while a friend or family member takes notes can aid in collecting your thoughts as starting point.

1. How did you become interested in audiology?
2. What are some experiences you have had or opportunities you’ve taken to demonstrate your interest?
3. What aspects of the profession are you most passionate about?
4. What do you see yourself doing as a professional in the future? Do you have a specific population or setting you envision as part of your career?
5. What personality traits do you have that will help you be successful, and which traits do you hope to develop further?

Whether someone takes bullet-point notes of your answers, you write down answers, or you record yourself, a record of your answers will serve as a basis for the next steps.

Step 2: The Prompt

You are likely to be given a prompt that includes specific elements to write about. Each school that you chose to apply to should have their prompt listed as part of their application materials if a personal statement is required. Ensure that you have thoroughly read the prompt for each program to which you plan to apply, as they may appear similar, but have slight differences that you will need to address.

Common Prompts:

- What attracted you to this field of study?
- What have you done to learn more about it?
- How do you plan to use your education and training?
- What do you perceive as the needs and/or challenges in this field of study?
- Does your academic record reflect your ability in the field you desire? If not, please explain.
- What particular strengths do you possess that qualify you for the program?
- What education and skills do you expect to acquire through obtaining this degree?
- Why specifically do you want to attend this university?
  - Be sure to read their website, contact their faculty, and discuss with your advisors so that you have enough information to answer this question genuinely.

Many of these questions reflect similar ideas to what you have thought about during your reflection in Step 1. Look back to what you said while reflecting for connections to the questions in your prompts. **For those schools with similar prompts, you may write one general statement and tailor it to each school.**
Step 3: Putting Pen to Paper (or Fingers to Keyboard)

Now that you know what you need to answer and have put thought into your answers, you have material to work with for this stage. Everyone has different strategies for writing, whether it be planning an outline or writing the entirety as an informal rough draft in one sitting, so feel confident using whichever strategy you have found works for you. However, it is important to focus on organizing what you will say such that it is logical and easy to follow.

Chronological order is a widely-accepted strategy, as it walks the reader through your experiences and thoughts as you yourself have experienced them and can help the reader understand your story. Like a story, your statement can be exciting, entertaining, and memorable to experience because this is your chance to stand out and make the readers feel like they want to know you better before even meeting you. It is your first impression in terms of personality!

For example, you may begin with a paragraph about how you became interested in audiology, include examples of activities you have done beyond required classes, talk about how this has influenced what you want to do in the future and why you will be successful, and end by explaining why you would like to attend this specific university.

General Do’s and Don’ts

- Do focus on your college or recent career (don’t reference high school).
- Do describe how important experiences have been impactful for you (don’t re-write your resume in paragraph form; go deeper and draw connections).
- Do consider your audience (don’t write anything that is inaccurate or may be construed as disrespectful).
- Do use your own voice (don’t be too casual, use clichés, or write what you think they want to hear).
## Example Do’s and Don’ts

These statements were created as examples. Any similarities to submitted statements are coincidental.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Instead, Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I learned leadership skills as a captain of my high school softball team that will help me be a successful audiologist.”</td>
<td>While this leadership position may have fostered growth and teambuilding skills, it is likely many years in the past. Highlighting a more recent experience would be more valuable. This reads similarly to a bullet point that may be found in a resume. For it to be worth including in the personal statement, more detail should be added describing the impact the experience has had and how it may relate to your future career.</td>
<td>“Through working at my university’s library for the past three years, I have learned valuable organization and communication skills that will aid me in completing graduate school successfully, and will help me to become a responsible clinician who can respectfully listen to patients’ needs and respond appropriately.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I want to be an audiologist so that I can fix people’s hearing/ Hearing aids are incredible technology that restore hearing.”</td>
<td>Before including a statement about the scope of audiology (what audiologists do), it is wise to have an experienced audiologist or professor confirm its accuracy. In the cases above, while amplification technology and aural rehabilitation have come a long way, the statement makes false claims about the ability to restore hearing to “normal.”</td>
<td>“Ongoing advances in amplification technology are improving the tools that audiologists can use for aural rehabilitation and I am passionate about learning more about this process so that I can help improve patients’ communication abilities, thereby improving their quality of life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The field of audiology as a whole does a poor job of treating a diverse patient-base.”</td>
<td>A statement like this may come across as disrespectful to those currently in the profession, regardless of accuracy with all circumstances considered (location, personal experience, etc.) If this is a motivating factor for the student, it can be rephrased positively.</td>
<td>“I believe that audiology must develop to become more inclusive for all patients. My double major in Spanish and Communication Disorders will allow me to better serve Spanish-speaking patients in areas where healthcare translators may not be accessible enough. I look forward to advocating for patients of different backgrounds and ensuring that each person I see as a clinician is treated respectfully and feels understood.”</td>
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Step 4: Finalizing

It is critically important to make sure your finished statement is properly reviewed before it is considered “final,” both in terms of the content and writing mechanics. It may be helpful to take a few days away from the statement and revisit it with fresh eyes. While re-reading it, check for the following:

- Did you fully answer every question that was asked in the prompt?
- Do you sound confident and respectful?
- Are there any grammar or spelling mistakes?
  - It is highly recommended you read the essay out loud, as grammatical errors and “awkward” language is often most apparent when heard in speech.
- Is proper punctuation and capitalization used?
- Is the formatting appropriate?
  - Separate text into paragraphs when changing topics
  - 1-2 page max unless otherwise specified
  - Appropriate font, margins, and line spacing

Once you have formalized your statement to the best of your ability, ask others to read it and provide feedback. It is beneficial to have readers who are familiar with audiology, like professors, advisors, and graduate students. It is also advantageous to have readers who are not familiar with the field, like family or friends. Most universities have a writing center and/or career development center that assists students with brainstorming, formatting, spelling, and grammatical checks for their personal statements and/or resumes.

Personal Statement Samples

The following personal statements have been provided by audiology graduate students who are members of SAA. They are intended to be used as examples of successful statements. As you read through them, consider:

- Was there anything noteworthy/interesting?
- What did they do well?
- What could have been improved?
- If you were an application committee, would you accept them? Why or why not?

The header denotes the year in which the author ultimately enrolled.
*Some text has been altered to remove identifying information, such as names and universities.*
Example 1 (2015)

I believe that music is an integral element of life, on both an individual and societal level. While it can evoke the deepest emotions through personal relevance, history has also shown its capacity to connect members of communities in order to make changes, such as inciting rebellion and promoting peace. Since I was young, music has inspired and entertained me. I have taken clarinet lessons and played in many school and auditioned ensembles for the past 10 years. Now, I am minoring in music to learn more about its history and theory. I declared SLHS as my major when I realized that even with hearing aids and auditory implants, not everyone can experience music how it is intended to be heard.

This realization drove me to read articles about music perception with hearing aids and cochlear implants and I found that there has not been much done to optimize listening to music with hearing impairments. Jumping from journal to journal, it also became evident the state of the auditory system can have an effect on a person’s experience with music, but music can also have beneficial and adverse effects on the auditory pathway. I am exploring aspects of this dichotomous relationship as part of a research project being conducted at this university with three faculty members. We are in the early stages of a longitudinal study, informally titled “MusiConn,” to determine the prevalence of noise induced hearing loss in college-aged musicians. I am currently the only undergraduate student affiliated with the project and I will use the initial results to write my Honors thesis next semester. Compiling literature reviews, the hands-on aspects of recruiting, and training to conduct ABRs have cemented how rewarding research can be.

As a result of my interest in research, I’ve sought out projects in which I could collect and analyze my own data to fulfill Honors credit requirements rather than writing essays. For my Aural Rehabilitation class, I’m anonymously surveying teenage cochlear implant users about their musical preferences and listening behaviors. Through this, I have learned how to submit for IRB approval and write questionnaires. I look forward to presenting my results at the Frontiers in Undergraduate Research exhibition in the spring. For my Phonetics class, I am helping a native Mandarin-speaking Ph.D. student modify his accent. Although he is self-directed in advancing through textbooks full of relevant exercises, I agreed to take on a tutoring role in which I’d help him go through his exercises for a few hours per week and provide feedback and suggestions for pronunciation. This semester, he has agreed to let me record him reading a standardized passage so that I may transcribe them into IPA and look for patterns and progress showing more English phonemes. This experience has demonstrated the reward of developing a working relationship with an individual whom you can directly support, which has helped to solidify my interest in audiology. This, in addition to observing a local audiologist at her private practice, has convinced me to pursue a clinical career.

I believe the future of this field will continue to delve deeper into improving existing treatments, but also grow broader to cover more populations. As a clinician and possible researcher, I want to bring attention to musicians as a clinical population beyond the scope of noise induced hearing loss. There is a need to learn more about how music affects the auditory system beyond possibly damaging it. So far, studies show that musicians are more adept at listening in noise and have more robust auditory responses. Information like this could be used to benefit non-musicians. For example, I want to investigate if we can produce training programs to combat age-related auditory decline or habilitate young children with aids or implants that build on music-based pedagogies.

Your program has both the clinical and research aspects that I want from a graduate program. Specifically, I would love to continue working on the MusiConn project because it is completely relevant to my interests and experiences. It would be thrilling to see how the project evolves over the next few years. As a first year graduate student, I already would be familiar with the protocol and goals of this study, and would be able to help with data collection and recruitment of other student researchers as those before me graduate. While my end goal is to become a clinical audiologist, I truly hope to continue my involvement in research during the remainder of my education, and possibly beyond. For this reason, I am seriously
considering your combined AuD/PhD option. I would be honored to earn my graduate degree from this university.

**Example 2 (2014)**

My mother had a true passion for cooking. I liken watching her in the kitchen to a dancer gracefully soaring across the floor of a dance studio. The passion, like fire, flickered in her eyes and each movement was done with such poise and such purpose that you could not help but just stare in complete awe at the marvel of it all. She would usually sing softly or hum as she floated throughout the kitchen and smiled often because, for her, life at the moment was bliss. She and the food had this incredible connection and they “understood” one another. I think that is what made her cooking so wonderful because as you ate each savory bite you could taste the love, passion, and heart behind it all. The passion itself was an eclectic combination of her identity as a mother, a food enthusiast, and of course, a cook too.

My passion for audiology is similar. First, on a very basic level, I am an avid lover of learning and I plan to, in a sense, remain a “student” forever. Audiology is a field driven by technology, which, as we all know, changes on a daily basis. I am very much looking forward to the fact that as a working audiologist I will be required to take CEU classes each year to continue to develop my expertise in the field and offer my patients the most accurate information available.

Secondly, I am an artist, a singer at heart. Music, in many ways, is the language of my heart and often when nothing else in life seems to make sense, I turn to music and find instant solace. Because I have a personal and emotional relationship with sound via music, I feel that I can better relate to individuals with hearing loss since I myself know how detrimental it would be if I lost the ability to hear and how desperate I would be to correct or gain that ability back.

Finally, my partner was born deaf in his right ear. I have often heard that when an individual has hearing loss, their loved ones share in this hearing loss as well. I found this to be quite true after now dating him for nearly two years: I have seen him struggle, particularly in situations where noise is present (e.g.-restaurants, malls, bars, etc.), and have come to realize how difficult these kinds of environments can be for him. It is our most basic human need to understand and be understood and if that need cannot be accomplished, a breakdown occurs. As he puts it, “I feel like I’m missing so much of the world around me.” Dating him helps me feel that I now have a personal investment to help people like him manage and maybe even regain some aspect of their hearing loss.

As there were few courses offered at the undergraduate level exposing students to audiology, I began seeking out an internship while enrolled in classes this year so that I could gain more insight in the field of audiology itself. For the last seven months, I have been interning with an audiologist in her own private practice. Each day I walk in, she has a patient file on the desk and tells me to, after examining the patient’s history, current and past audiograms, and other pertinent file information, hypothesize what type of loss the patient has and why. I have truly fallen in love with this aspect of “puzzle-solving” because it sets the stage for what to expect in a clinical setting. Sometimes, the pieces fit together perfectly and reveal a very clear diagnosis; however, I have come to realize that in a clinical setting, many factors far beyond the scope of textbook logic often play a much greater role in revealing the final diagnosis. Clinicians deal with people and people are unpredictable. That said, I believe this ability to exist in the present and think on my feet will give me an edge as a prospective audiology student.

Though I realize my interests within the field of Audiology may change over the course of my doctoral program, I currently have a strong interest in cochlear implants and in the medical aspect of the field at large. I think it would be amazing to be a part of team capable of giving an individual the ability to hear, often for the very first time. I have watched several videos on YouTube when an individual first has their implant turned on and find that I get emotional at the momentous occasion. I cannot help but smile as I consider what an honor it would be to someday carry this same impact into a medical facility or a clinic, where I dedicate each day of my life to helping others live theirs.
Example 3 (2013)

Having a compassionate and caring nature, I always knew I wanted to work with children and healthcare seemed the ideal place to do so. Sitting in one of my first college classes, an audiology class, I immediately became consumed with the desire to learn all I could about this innovative field. After much research, clinical shadowing, discussions with professionals, and attendance at the AudiologyNOW conference in the spring of 2011 and again in 2012, I know that clinical pediatric audiology will allow me to use my strengths in the most fitting way. Since then, I have prepared myself for a rigorous and challenging graduate program by becoming involved in many organizations and projects, including becoming Vice President of my chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, studying abroad, and performing community volunteering. In addition, I have been working towards a research-based degree and am excited to use these experiences as underpinnings of clinical education, to finally be involved in the diagnosis and management of hearing disorders and investigate new technologies. I know that I would be an asset to your distinguished community at your University because of my goals and my drive for success.
Example 4 (2016)

My passion for the dynamic field of Audiology was defined long before joining the Communication Sciences and Disorders program. A combination of my enjoyment of helping others and my love for singing led me to want to help others who struggle to communicate. This prompted me to pursue Speech-Language Pathology. As I began coursework, I was introduced to the field of Audiology and realized the possibilities within this field are limitless.

Through Expressive Movement Initiative, I have the honor to teach movement to children who are differently abled. A mission of the organization is the "mentorship between our students and teachers;" we say mentorship because these kids teach us more then we could ever teach them. A smart, energetic boy helped solidify my decision to become an Audiologist. I realized that before communication can begin, hearing the communication must occur. You can see the desire to communicate in his eyes and I want to help clients find the sound so they may find their voice.

With this degree, I will be impactful to surrounding communities to allow for easier access to hearing technologies, regardless of age and cognitive abilities. My experience with those who are differently abled will help me develop easier and more effective ways of diagnosing and treating hearing loss. I will advocate for the expansion of existing programs to improve accessibility and create new inclusive programs. In the distant future, I hope to take these programs internationally.

I work hard to be a multi-faceted person who achieves within the classroom, and while giving back to the community. I accomplish most with a full schedule and work through my stresses by staying organized and focused on milestones. I am a problem solver and hard-worker; I will use my determination to set goals for my clients and approach treatment with diverse methods to help others most effectively.

This year, I am assisting the Hearing, Evaluation, Rehabilitation, and Outcomes (HERO) laboratory with the lab's ongoing research endeavors and a research project of my own. I realized my dad has signs of hearing loss; yet in his words, "I pass the hearing tests." This sparked my interest in a research project that aims to determine firefighters’ knowledge of, experiences with, and attitudes toward hearing loss and hearing conservation. Our goal is to present at AAA and Oklahoma Research Day.

I am eager to begin learning the necessities and beyond to make an impact on the clients I will treat during my externship, and as a clinical practitioner. While I do not plan to begin a PhD immediately, I am hopeful to continue with research so that one day I can serve as a mentor to future students. In the distant future, I would love the opportunity to serve as an Audiologist in a university setting. I understand that completing a doctoral program is no easy task but I am determined to be successful alongside the Doctor of Audiology Class of 2020 at your University.
Example 5 (2014)

My liberal arts education allowed me to obtain a well-rounded education at the bachelor’s level that will be an asset at the graduate level. Throughout my academic career, I have always had a strong passion for the humanities and natural sciences, constantly faced with the dilemma of which field to concentrate on. Thankfully, my undergraduate classes introduced me to audiology. As an English and Speech and Hearing Sciences double major, I have found a way to meld the passion I have for language with my interest in the sciences. I have acquired skills through my classes, graduate school requirements, and extracurricular activities that have helped me become a more well-rounded learner. Beyond that, these skills have given me the problem-solving abilities to see beyond set disciplines and relate to other people more effectively.

Although I decided to pursue a career in audiology after taking communication sciences and disorders classes, I fell in love with the profession when I began to observe others working in the field. In my textbooks, I have learned about the importance of hearing health, assistive listening devices, and the possibilities for auditory (re)habilitation. However, through observations, I have learned that audiology is not only a challenging profession that demands problem solving skills, motivation, and intelligence, but it is also a profession that requires compassion and a commitment to helping individuals hear and feel better.

As an avid learner, I consider myself highly motivated and passionate. For this reason, I have sought out numerous opportunities to observe and to develop professionally, particularly through membership in the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association. As the founder and President of our local NSSLHA chapter, I actively promote principles of evidence-based practice and continuing education. I subscribe to ASHA discussion boards, read the ASHA Leader, follow ASHA and NSSLHA social media, seek out professional opportunities such as the A.G. Bell State Fall Conferences and the ASHA Convention, and participate in ASHA’s Student to Empowered Professional (STEP) Mentoring, which has by far been the most impactful of any of my experiences in the field.

My first year in the STEP mentoring program, I was matched with an audiologist. Though the program is meant to be a distance-mentoring program, she works in three practices close to my college and as a result, I was able to observe at her practice. After completing my first few observation hours with her, I knew that I also wanted to observe in different settings. I observed at an Adult Audiology Department in the fall of 2012 and this past summer I volunteered and observed in a Pediatric Audiology Department. The hospital setting most appeals to me because the audiologists have more opportunities to work with implants and a range of different patients. However, my college has a relatively small CSD program, and I want to remain open to the vast placement opportunities prior to attending graduate school. In the same way, I want to explore additional possibilities with the diverse range of patients I may work with. During the summer, I spent in the Pediatric Department, I enjoyed observing patients in the pediatric setting. When I decided, I wanted to pursue audiology during my sophomore year, I immediately assumed that I would work in this setting. I have always enjoyed working with children and I have a passion for language development. For this reason, I would like to be in a position that enables me to provide resources and education options for the parents of children with hearing loss to help facilitate the development of language. However, despite my comfort with the pediatric population, I do not want to rule out the possibility to work with adults. The adult population offers its own set of challenges, and throughout the course of my internship, I realized that my career goals are not set in stone. For this reason, I may be more inclined to work in a setting that allows me to interact with both populations. In graduate school, I will seek out various clinical setting opportunities in order to cement my decision.
Furthermore, your university offers a unique integration of research opportunities for graduate students in the field of audiology. In my Assistive Listening Devices and Aural Habilitation class, a Med-El representative demonstrated the electrode and pieces of the cochlear implant. Though I had always been fascinated by the technology, seeing it firsthand inspired me to research it further. In the fall of 2012, I conducted a literature review on bimodal hearing benefits of implanted individuals wearing hearing aids in the contralateral ear. I am interested in expanding upon and continuing this research at the graduate level as well as learning about and participating in the latest implant research that is being conducted at Washington University. Therefore, a Doctor of Audiology degree from your university offers many opportunities for graduate students in research, placements, and coursework. I am confident that the program will provide me with all the necessary resources to become a knowledgeable professional capable of diagnosing and treating hearing loss, and I am eager to apply my passion, commitment, and motivation for the field at the university.
My fascination with the variety and complexity of different mammalian auditory systems has led me to the pursuit of an AuD/PhD dual degree in the field of hearing. Sound and communication have always interested me. I am trilingual and an avid guitar player and vocalist, and by pursuing a degree in human hearing I will have found the ideal combination of all my interests. How sound is conducted into the ear and how the brain perceives and interprets sound are details of human hearing that I simply cannot take for granted. I believe that my education and my previous experiences with independent research projects in the field and lab will make me a successful graduate student.

My interest in mammalian hearing was piqued during my summer 2013 fellowship at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), under the supervision of an audiologist. Throughout the summer, she and I spent considerable amounts of time discussing mammalian hearing, which continually deepened my interest in this field. I also observed CT imaging techniques performed on marine mammals, which obtained crucial information on head and neck trauma, including the inner ear. I will never forget the day a live harbor seal with an ear infection was brought in for a CT scan. The scan revealed a damaged middle ear with a missing ossicle. Apparently, the surgical vacuum instrument that had been used to remove the infection-induced caseosa in the animal’s ear canal had been sized for a canine instead of a seal. Since ear shape and size differs between these species, the incus was aspirated with the caseosa, which resulted in permanent hearing loss for the seal. To me, this highlighted the importance of accurate knowledge of the auditory anatomy of different mammalian species.

Much of my past research experience focused heavily on marine mammal research, including acoustics, hearing, and anatomy. My summer research project at WHOI and my year-long undergraduate thesis research at my college, gave me a strong background in acoustics, vocalizations, and the physical properties of sound. At WHOI, I used spectrograms to study data on mother-calf and male-male pair dolphin vocal interactions, which had been collected previously using Digital Acoustic Recording Tags in Sarasota, Florida. For my senior thesis project, I used underwater hydrophones to observe whether masking effects would result in altered dolphin vocalizations, such as the whistle frequency. In addition to work on acoustics, I also participated in a 60-hour weeklong research project in Florida with the Sarasota Dolphin Research Program, where I helped administer hearing tests (Auditory Evoked Potentials) on wild-caught bottlenose dolphins. We measured thresholds to document general hearing trends, as part of a 40-year study of this resident dolphin population. I also volunteered at the Marine Mammal Pathobiology Laboratory in Saint Petersburg, FL, for three semesters during my undergraduate studies, where I participated in a large number manatee necropsies. I had numerous opportunities to learn about manatee anatomy and I dissected out numerous earbones, which were sent out to another lab for aging. At WHOI, I also observed and participated in numerous necropsies of stranded seals, dolphins and small whales, and was able to dissect out the earbone of a Risso’s dolphin.

The combination of my research experiences involving marine mammal acoustics, hearing and anatomy, lead to my interest in human hearing. Since hearing is such a valuable part of a human life experience and certainly for me personally, clinical work would give me the opportunity to assist the hearing impaired to improve their quality of life. I would also be able to help individuals learn more about their own hearing, by explaining concepts and giving advice on how to minimize daily noise exposure. Working as a tutor and teaching assistant over the past five years has helped me realize how crucial patience and listening skills are, to communicate effectively. Furthermore, research on humans in addition to animal models, allows study results to directly benefit patients. I am therefore committed to obtaining a graduate degree in human hearing research and clinical work.

During my undergraduate studies, I gained experience in experimental design, hypothesis testing, statistics, scientific literature searches, and data analysis using MS Excel. I applied these skills in the lab and field as a research technician at the Center for Limnology, as an intern at WHOI, as a teaching assistant for
Biological Oceanography labs at my college, and as an undergraduate student working on my thesis research project. I gained scientific writing skills throughout my undergraduate studies at my college, for which I received high grades. At WHOI, my research project culminated in a formal research paper and final presentation for the WHOI Biology Department, which were also well received. Both my bioacoustics research project at WHOI and my senior thesis, which culminated in a final manuscript, have allowed me to gain valuable writing, field, and lab research experience, and have helped me prepare for graduate level research.

My goal is to obtain a strong background in the field of hearing, in order to pursue a career in clinical work and research. The Communication Sciences and Disorders department at your university would provide an excellent environment to further my education and training. I am interested in your department because of the opportunity for students to gain a background in clinical work as an AuD student, while simultaneously pursuing hearing research as a PhD student. Furthermore, I am interested in your department’s wide variety of courses in which students can explore both clinical and scientific aspects of hearing. During my first year as an AuD student I would also hope to gain research experience in a researcher’s lab, with projects concerning binaural hearing and hearing loss. Research on how binaural hearing processes are relevant for listening in noisy environments, and how these processes alter with age, is an intriguing field of study.

By pursuing a dual degree, I hope to collaborate with other audiologists to better understand hearing processes, and to advocate proper treatment and early detection for hearing loss in people of all ages. This fall, I had the opportunity to observe audiologists at the Speech and Hearing Clinic and at the Audiology Center. During my observations of children in the Head Start program, children with Down’s Syndrome, as well as seniors with hearing loss, I learned the importance of high quality communication skills, use of sign language, patience, technological know-how, and how to limit behavioral cues when testing younger patients. The observations also provided valuable insight into the instrumentation used in clinical work. Pursuing a combined clinical and research degree at your university would allow me to maintain a connection between research and its clinical application. It would be an opportunity to directly apply advances in research to clinical work. Furthermore, I look forward to work as an audiologist in a clinical setting, since I enjoy working with people of different age groups, administering and interpreting a variety of tests, and working independently, yet part of a team of audiologists. Because sound is so important in my own life, I think that helping those with hearing loss would be a very fitting and rewarding career path.
Example 7 (2015)

The moment I decided I wanted to pursue a career in audiology, I was sitting behind a two-way mirror in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. Frantically scribbling away notes about the appointment on a piece of scratch paper, I was absorbing every single event that was occurring in front of me, even though I had no knowledge about any of the tests the graduate student was performing or even standards for basic hearing. All I knew is that I wanted to learn and see so much more of what was occurring in the clinic and come back to observe another appointment as soon as I could. I walked into that observation room just wondering about the field of audiology, and I walked out of it inspired and fully motivated to start this career path.

First, let me rewind a few years before this experience, to my freshman year of college at a university far from home. I had entered the Communication Sciences and Disorders major just because I knew I wanted to help people, and thought that maybe speech pathology would be a career I would want to pursue. However, while I found speech anatomy, linguistics and child development interesting topics to examine in depth and learn more about, I could not see myself entering the speech pathology career path. I went into the healthcare field because I could only see myself pursuing a future career that resulted in my expertise benefitting someone else’s life. However, I also knew that I was results-oriented; ever since I was a child I always wanted to put the whole puzzle together and see the fixed, final result. I wanted to find a field where I could help a patient and their life would be improved once they left my office and went out into the world again. As my studies continued, I found myself unsure of the path I had chosen, but determined to not give up on my dream of becoming a healthcare professional.

My sophomore year was a difficult one due to the terrible shooting that occurred in my hometown of Sandy Hook, Connecticut. My studies in speech and hearing science came to a halt as I began the process of transferring to a school closer to home and my family. Eventually, I succeeded in transferring to your university, after a semester as a part-time un-matriculated student at a nearby university. It was at this point that I finally had the experience of observing audiology appointments for the first time in March of 2014. I had finally found the more factual field I was looking for, and as I conducted further research comparing the two fields, it became obvious that the route of audiology was what would give me the most satisfaction in a career. From that point on, I knew I wanted to become a practicing audiologist and I was driven to gain as much experience as I could before applying to graduate school.

One of my most significant experiences I have had in this past year was shadowing an audiologist this past summer at her private practice in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. Her advice and stories of her experiences of being an audiologist in the past 20 years made me even more inspired by this field. While shadowing her, I was able to interact with her patients and have hands-on experience with programming hearing aids, and learn about the manufacturers and the dynamics behind the hearing aid industry. I was also able to have the experience of meeting with an Oticon representative, who came to the audiologist’s office to discuss some of the new products that were introduced at the past year’s AudiologyNOW! conference. The technology is constantly being improved in order to provide the best for patients and I look forward to learning and being a part of this evolution.

Other great experiences I have had also include taking an Introduction to Audiology course this past fall semester. Since the teacher is a graduate student herself, her advice was invaluable since she just went through the experience of applying to audiology programs as well. I spent many of her office hours just talking about what we were learning in class and what it is like to be a graduate student at your university. Given her fantastic reviews of the program and the faculty, I realized how great of a decision it was to transfer to your university’s Speech, Language and Hearing Science program as an undergraduate. While December 14th, 2012 was a horrible day that will never be forgotten, it led me on the right direction to a university that I’m proud to be at today.

In addition to doing many inspiring community service projects with different adolescent, aging and disabled populations and performing well academically, I have also had the ability to become involved in
research. During my undergraduate time at your university, I helped to test and collect data on mice with a gene mutation and measured their anxiety response to a noise stimulus with my professor for my Biopsychology class. This past fall semester I assisted a faculty member with editing a publication that will be featured in the sixth edition of *The Noise Manual*. This book is significant for professionals in the hearing conservation industry and will be read by thousands of people in the field once published later this year. I will be continuing to work with her this spring semester in her lab by assisting graduate students with their Capstone projects and research interests. Both of these research experiences have given me the opportunity to work with distinguished professors and further propelled me to pursue higher education in audiology and continue conducting research in the field.

I want to stay at your university because I feel like I’ve only just started my education here. Once I graduate, I will only have 3 semesters under my belt, and I’m not ready to leave this incredible university. The research opportunities in the audiology field are numerous, and after discussing your doctorate program with other AuD students in the Student Academy of Audiology, I can see myself excelling here. All of the faculty members that I’ve met so far are approachable and to have the opportunity to collaborate with them would be an invaluable experience in my graduate education. I would be incredibly grateful and appreciative of the opportunity to become an AuD student here, and to finally have the opportunity to be on the other side of that glass window.
Additional Resources
The following resources have excellent information and examples that may be found helpful.

Purdue OWL

In addition to information about the personal statement in general, questions to ask yourself before writing, and general advice, the following is accessible in the left sidebar:
→ Examples
→ Advice from Admissions Officers
→ Top 10 Rules and Pitfalls

University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign: The Center for Writing Studies

In addition to information about the personal statement in general, this source includes:
→ Context Considerations
→ One Process for Writing the Personal Statement
→ Personal Inventory Questions
→ Do’s and Don’ts

Medical College of Wisconsin

This source contains 15 samples of very well-written personal statements by medical school applicants.