

Is this you?

- good communication skills
- good listening and interpersonal skills
- enjoy language and communication
- able to inspire confidence and cooperation
- enjoy working with people
- tactful and patient approach to people's problems
- able to deal with complex and unusual situations.

What is a speech pathologist?

Speech pathologists assess, diagnose, treat and provide management services to people of all ages with communication and/or swallowing impairments. People seek the assistance of a speech pathologist if they have speech, language, voice or fluency difficulties which impact on their ability to communicate effectively. Speech pathologists also work with people of all ages who have difficulties swallowing food and drink.

What does a speech pathologist do?

Speech pathologists may perform the following tasks:

- give advice and techniques to a mother whose child has feeding difficulties
- work with adults and children who have cochlear implants
- present parent education and training sessions for children who are slow to start talking
- work in a multidisciplinary team to provide rehabilitation to a patient after a head injury or a stroke
- provide high-tech communication strategies for patients undergoing treatment for cancer
- develop therapy training packages for clients and their families
- provide assessment and rehabilitation of patient's swallowing function after neuro-surgery to remove a brain tumour
- conduct specialised assessments of speech, language, literacy, fluency (stuttering) and voice skills, and developing therapy programs to suit patients of all ages and abilities
- work with someone who stutters
- provide therapy to a group of clients
- attend and present conferences and workshops
- supervise speech pathology students' clinical work.

'I was always interested in languages and talking with people, so a career in speech pathology seemed the right choice. There are so many areas you can work in, and because every situation is unique, I've learned to be creative in meeting the goals of the patient and their family. For me, the rewards come from meeting those challenges.'

Katie Walker-Smith, Speech Pathologist



Where can speech pathologists work in Queensland Health?

Queensland Health speech pathologists work in hospitals, specialist mental health facilities, community health settings, policy development and research roles. Speech pathologists employed by Queensland Health work in a variety of clinical areas such as paediatrics, acute care, aged care and rehabilitation. Speech Pathologists work throughout Queensland in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote settings. Communication between clients and clinicians is facilitated via a state-of-the-art Telehealth network.

Services are provided to patients with communication and swallowing problems developing from a range of conditions and disorders including:

- autism
- cancer
- cerebral palsy
- cleft palate
- cochlear implant
- complex medical and surgical problems
- developmental delay
- hearing impairment
- mental illness
- progressive medical conditions
- stroke and acquired brain injury
- tracheostomy
- voice disorders.

Speech pathologists employed by Queensland Health actively participate in clinical research programs and contribute to the ongoing clinical education of speech pathology students and graduates across Queensland.

Can a Speech Pathologist specialise?

There are a number of clinical areas in which Speech Pathologists develop specialist skills including:

- acute care
- geriatric care
- Intellectual and/or physical disability
- mental health
- paediatrics
- rehabilitation.

How to become a speech pathologist

To become a speech pathologist you have to complete a speech pathology course at university. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, biological science, chemistry, physics, and health and physical education are normally required. Contact the relevant university for more information, as requirements may change.

Degree courses

James Cook University – Townsville Campus:

- Bachelor of Speech Pathology, four years full time

University of Queensland – St Lucia Campus:

- Bachelor of Speech Pathology, four years full time, (graduate entry)
- Master of Speech Pathology Studies, two years full time

Registration

In Queensland, speech pathologists need to be registered with the speech pathologists Board of Queensland before they can practise. Speech pathologists are usually required to be eligible for membership with Speech Pathology Australia. Graduates are eligible for employment with Queensland Health once they are registered.

What scholarships are available?

There are a variety of scholarships and financial assistance available. Check out the respective tertiary institutes' website for details. Also available is the Queensland Health Rural Scholarships Scheme.

Interested in other allied health careers?

Visit the Queensland Health Work For Us website www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus for more **Careers in health** fact sheets – Allied health series:

- Occupational therapist
- Dietitian
- Radiographer
- Physiotherapist
- Psychologist
- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Podiatrist.

Where can I find out more info?

Speech Pathology Australia

Phone: (03) 9642 4899

Fax: (03) 9642 4922

Email: office@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

Website: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland

Phone: (07) 3225 2508

Email: speechpathology@healthregboards.qld.gov.au

Website: www.speechpathboard.qld.gov.au

James Cook University

Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences

Phone: (07) 4781 4409

Email: ug.mhms@jcu.edu.au

Website: www.jcu.edu.au

The University of Queensland

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Phone: (07) 3365 4506

Email: enquiries@shrs.uq.edu.au

Website: www.shrs.uq.edu.au

The QTAC website has a list of universities and tertiary institutions with links to universities and courses offered. Go to www.qtac.edu.au and select Institutions.

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities Queensland Health can offer you go to www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus

Do great things every day

