

# Interested in a Career in Speech Pathology?



## ◆ What is a Speech Pathologist?

Speech pathologists are specialists who work with people who have communication and swallowing difficulties that may occur across all stages of the life span.

## ◆ Why do we need Speech Pathologists?

Communication has a major impact on quality of life. Giving someone a means to communicate more effectively their needs and wants as well as their thoughts and emotions can empower and provide an individual with great satisfaction. Speech pathologists also assist people with swallowing difficulties, this also has a dramatic impact on a person's wellbeing and quality of life.

## ◆ Where can I find out more?

For further information on speech pathology as a career, contact Speech Pathology Australia; the official body representing speech pathologists in Australia [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

For further information on salaries and related information for speech pathologists please contact [www.vhia.com.au](http://www.vhia.com.au)



## ◆ How can I become a Speech Pathologist?

Speech pathologists (formerly called speech therapists) complete a university degree. This degree encompasses all aspects of communication including hearing, speech, writing, reading, signs, symbols and gestures. As well, it covers the diagnosis and management of eating and drinking disorders.

## ◆ Where can I study Speech Pathology?

There are several accredited speech pathology degrees around Australia. These are listed below. A degree in speech pathology is 4 years fulltime; all courses provide some clinical experience. A high level of English language competency is required. To find out more detailed information on the courses please contact the universities concerned directly.

TAFE: Certificates can be completed in allied health assistance. Allied health assistants are employed in positions in various health care settings including alongside speech pathologists.

Distance / Online: There are currently no accredited online or distance courses.

<b>NSW</b>	Charles Sturt University	Bachelor of Health Science
	University of Newcastle	Bachelor of Speech Pathology
	University of Sydney	Bachelor of Applied Science
<b>QLD</b>	University of Queensland	Bachelor of Speech Pathology
	James Cook University	Bachelor of Speech Pathology
<b>SA</b>	Flinders University	Bachelor of Speech Pathology
	La Trobe University	Bachelor of Speech Pathology
<b>VIC</b>		Bachelor of Health Science
	Curtin University of Technology	Bachelor of Science
<b>WA</b>	Edith Cowan University	Bachelor of Speech Pathology

### ◆ What are my job prospects upon graduating?

Speech pathology as a profession is currently in demand in Australia and there are also many opportunities for speech pathologists to work all over the world.

### ◆ Where do Speech Pathologists work?

Speech pathologists work in a variety of settings both in the public and the private sector. They can choose to specialise with a particular age group or area of practice. For example they may choose to specialise in children with autism, adult stroke patients or the deaf community. Speech pathologists often work in several areas over the course of their career

Speech Pathologists work in:

- Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools
- Aged care facilities
- Hospitals
- Universities
- Rehabilitation services
- Mental health services
- Community health centres
- Private clinics
- Specialist disability services
- Corporate settings
- Home-based therapy



### ◆ Who do Speech Pathologists work with?

Speech pathologists work with clients of all ages, assisting them in numerous ways

Examples include:

- Advising mothers about feeding a baby with a cleft palate
- Working with pre-schoolers who are not developing their early speech sounds, or who are slow to talk
- Helping children who have difficulty understanding what their teacher is saying
- Working with children whose difficulty with oral language means they are likely to struggle with learning to read and write
- Assisting children and adults who stutter
- Helping individuals with swallowing problems following a stroke and/or assisting them to regain their speech
- Assisting carers of people with dementia to develop successful strategies and aids for communication
- Training professional voice users, such as teachers, to use their voice more effectively
- Advising on electronic communication devices for individuals with cerebral palsy
- Preventing respiratory problems caused by difficulty in swallowing. This reduces the time spent in hospital.
- Working with clients with acquired brain injuries after an accident
- Offering support to carers of people with intellectual disabilities and encouraging them to use alternative communication methods



### ◆ How do Speech Pathologists work?

Speech pathologists work in a variety of ways including providing individual therapy, working in small groups, working within a classroom, becoming involved in home-based programs, providing resources and information, as well as giving advice and direction to clients, their carers and other professionals.

They coordinate the management of clients, work as part of a multi disciplinary team, consult with other agencies, provide workshops and support family members and other caregivers. A speech pathologist is an important member of an early intervention team, an aged care services team and a school therapy team.

The role of speech pathologists is to advocate strongly for appropriate care and services for people with communication disabilities.

