

## Speech Pathology Letter of Intent (UBC)

### Applicant 1

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During my high school years, I learned about a family friend's occupation as a speech-language pathologist (SLP) working with individuals of various communication disorders. I was astounded that this profession specializes in communication disorders yet contains broad applications from stroke survivors to individuals on the autism spectrum and many others still. My passion for speech-language pathology grew rapidly as I studied it further and became more aware of the need for these services. I realized that for some, reading the news, swallowing food, or even holding a conversation with a loved one can be a luxury. Upon reflection and practical job shadowing experiences, I was confronted with the deeper significance of a speech-language pathologist's profession. I believe that meaningful relationships are contingent upon being able to express oneself. Being a speech-language pathologist means facing the challenging yet rewarding task of removing the obstacles that stand in the way of such communication.

My work as a Behavior Interventionist for children on the autism spectrum taught me how to adapt to the needs of the individual while also building rapport with family members to provide holistic care for each client. I saw the application of previously studied coursework manifest itself into a unique and worthwhile endeavor while working with an Applied Behavior Analyst and a SLP. Through my current position as a Program Assistant for the Stroke Recovery Association of B.C., I prepare and lead weekly activities for adults with aphasia. These valuable experiences have shown me the diversity of individuals' conditions and have exercised my creativity in tailoring programs to one's needs. As previous challenges became effortless for each patient, I found fulfillment in being a part of that journey.

I gained exposure to scientific research when I was invited to work in SFU's Phonological Processing Lab. This opportunity allowed me to be a part of the process I read

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about in scientific articles and, two years later, I am proud to have a deeper understanding of research methods, practices, and dissemination. This semester, I am pursuing a personal project under the direction of a supervisor on word recognition in L2 learners of English. Using longitudinal eyetracking data, I will examine competition, inhibition, and activation of target and distractor items as English learners listen to spoken words. This project considers questions such as, “How does an English learner’s strategy of word recognition change over time?” and “How does an English learner’s word recognitions strategy differ from that of a monolingual native speaker?”. Given the opportunity, I would love to continue pursuing similar topics regarding speech processing in UBC’s speech-language pathology program.

I believe that UBC’s School of Audiology and Speech Sciences (SASS) provides aspiring SLPs with professional expertise by honing research skills and providing experience through externships. I would love to study in this top program to better serve those with communication disorders. As a passionate and enthusiastic student, I believe further education through UBC’s SASS would equip me to become an outstanding researcher and SLP.

### **Professionals Observed or Met**

- Speech Language Pathologists
  - Speech Pathologist 1 – Location or Company
- Audiologists
  - Audiologist 1 – Location or Company