

Speech Pathology Letter of Intent (UBC)

Applicant 3

1234 Street, BC [postal code]
email@email.ca | 123-456-7890

When I began volunteering at [**name for care centre**], I met a client with global aphasia who would take my hand, squeeze it, and look steadily into my eyes for minutes at a time. It was during these moments that I began to understand how someone can deeply suffer when the foundational need to communicate cannot be met. Consequently, I decided that I wanted to be a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and help individuals regain, maintain, or develop this central human need to communicate.

My experiences working alongside SLPs and other professionals who assist individuals with special needs have shown me the many dimensions of an SLP's role, and have allowed me to develop the knowledge and qualities that I believe will make me a high caliber SLP. At [**name for care centre**] I worked with an individual with multiple sclerosis who required an augmentative communication device in order to converse and accomplish daily activities. This unique experience helped me develop patience and an understanding of the frustration people can feel due to barriers to communication. At [**name for rehabilitation company**], by helping to reorganize the clinic's file systems, I became familiar with treatment procedures for various speech and language challenges. In particular, the clinic showed me how the role of an SLP can go beyond the walls of the clinic in supporting a client as an expert witness in legal proceedings. At [**name for organization**], I helped youth participants improve their social communication skills in starting conversations and turn taking which required me to constantly adjust my approach to each teen. Similarly, at the adult day centres, I helped develop communication goals for clients by listening and working with their families in order to ensure support across all aspects of daily activities. These tremendously rewarding experiences have

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shown me the ways in which SLPs support their clients and have allowed me to develop the skills and understanding which will make me an empathetic and creative SLP.

Exploring research questions is an integral part of being a professional in a field guided by evidence-based practice. UBC values collaboration in research, which I also came to appreciate through my involvement in various labs at SFU including the Children's Memory Research Group, the Personality and Emotion Research Lab and, most recently, the Language and Brain lab. My work and research interests in the lab have focused on eye gazing patterns during speech which have direct implications for pre-verbal language interventions. When I published an article through the SFU Undergraduate Journal of Psychology and experienced numerous rounds of peer review, I also noticed that cooperation with others can challenge and refine one's thinking in order to produce a sound investigation. I am excited to undertake a similar challenge this spring when I submit my research to the Northwest Linguistics Conference.

Restoring a person's ability to communicate can be critical to enhancing their quality of life, and I believe my experiences will allow me to do this as a compassionate and enthusiastic SLP.