

**FOR CONFIRMATION****PUBLIC****CLOSED SESSION**

**TO:** Executive Committee

**SPONSOR:** Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

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**PRESENTER:** Same as above

**CONTACT INFO:**

**DATE:** January 31, 2022 for February 7, 2022

**AGENDA ITEM:** 4

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Proposal for the closure of the PhD and MSc in Speech-Language Pathology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs recommends to the Academic Board approval of proposals for the closure of existing degree and graduate programs. (*AP&P Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.a.iii*)

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for recommendation] (January 11, 2022)
2. Academic Board [for approval] (January 27, 2022)
3. **Executive Committee [for confirmation] (February 7, 2022)**

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

The proposal to close the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology was approved at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine Faculty Council meeting on October 18, 2021.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

This proposal is to close the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology. These degree programs are offered through the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute (RSI), Temerty Faculty of

Medicine. Admissions to the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology were administratively suspended as of January 2021.

The programs are being closed in the context of a broader curricular review of the programs offered by RSI. This curricular review has led to re-structuring/re-alignment of the fields that fall under the umbrella of Rehabilitation Sciences. The academic content of the MSc and PhD Speech-Language Pathology programs will be fully available to future students within a new field called “Speech-language Pathology” in the existing MSc and PhD programs in Rehabilitation Sciences. The new field will align fully with other fields/specializations in Rehabilitation Sciences (e.g., Occupational Science, Movement Science, which are two other large disciplines in Rehabilitation Sciences).

The new field is being approved through a separate major modification proposal and will be effective September 1, 2022. The restructured Rehabilitation Sciences program will enhance program flexibility and strengthen professional development preparation in the Rehabilitation Sciences. Speech-language Pathology is a key clinical and research area of Rehabilitation Sciences and the job market for Rehabilitation Sciences graduates is much larger than for Speech-language Pathology. Students completing the new field in Speech-Language Pathology within the MSc and PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences will be well positioned to compete for jobs within this broader area.

As of July 2021, there were three MSc students and four PhD students in the programs. All are aware that the programs will be closing. The effective date of August 31, 2027 was chosen to align with SGS regulations on when students will need to have completed their programs.

Substantial consultation has occurred with faculty and students within Speech-language Pathology and Rehabilitation Sciences on the closure of the programs.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no negative financial implications to the closure of the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Confirmed by the Executive Committee

THAT the proposed closure of the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, dated August 12, 2021, to which admissions were administratively suspended in January 2021, be approved with an anticipated program closure date of August 31, 2027.

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**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- *Proposal for the closure of the MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology*

# University of Toronto Proposal: Closure of an Existing Program (Graduate or Undergraduate)

This template has been developed in line with the University of Toronto’s Quality Assurance Process. The process followed for the closure of any program is the same as that required for the approval of any new such program.

<b>Closure proposed; please specify precisely what is being closed:</b>	MSc and PhD in Speech-Language Pathology
<b>Department/unit if applicable:</b>	Rehabilitation Sciences Institute
<b>Faculty/academic division:</b>	Medicine/Division 4
<b>Faculty/academic division contact:</b>	Justin Nodwell, Vice Dean, Research and Graduate Education Rachel Zulla, Graduate Affairs Officer
<b>Department/unit contact:</b>	Yana Yunusova, Acting Director, Rehabilitation Sciences Institute Kristen Musselman, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences
<b>Effective date program was administratively suspended to new admissions:</b>	January, 2021
<b>Effective date of full closure of program:</b>	August 31, 2027
<b>Version date:</b>	August 12, 2021

## 1 Brief Summary

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- Please clarify precisely what is being closed.
- What is the relationship between what is being closed and any remaining offerings:
  - ▶ If only part of a program is being closed, please clarify the relationship between this and those portions of the program that will remain open.

This proposal is to close the MSc and PhD programs in Speech-Language Pathology housed in the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute. These programs were administratively suspended as of January 2021. There are currently 7 students in the programs, who are expected to complete their programs ahead of the effective date of closure, August 31, 2027. The program is being closed due to re-structuring/ re-alignment across the fields under the umbrella of Rehabilitation Sciences.

The academic content of these programs will be fully available to future students within a new field called “Speech-language Pathology” in the existing MSc and PhD programs in

Rehabilitation Sciences. The new field is being created through a separate major modification proposal that has been developed at the same time as this proposal. The new field in the MSc and PhD will be available to students as of September 1, 2022.

The separate professional master's program, the Master of Health Science in Speech-Language Pathology offered by the Department of Speech-Language Pathology is not impacted by this proposal and will continue to be offered.

## 2 Academic Rationale

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Background:

- You may wish to speak to when the program was first created; how long has it been offered; past success of the program.
- What has led to the decision to close the program?
- Please provide a full academic rationale:
  - ▶ You may wish to refer to changing enrolment; changing disciplinary landscape; shifting expertise of the professoriate; poor quality of the academic offering; overlap with other existing programs.
  - ▶ Where appropriate, you may want to quote from recent unit or program reviews.
  - ▶ Explain alignment with the unit's academic plan.

The Rehabilitation Sciences Institute (RSI) offers the graduate research programs associated with the research portfolios of faculty members in the Departments of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, as well as for rehabilitation scientists across various other U of T departments (e.g., Medicine, Kinesiology, Psychology, Engineering etc.) and hospital-based research institutes.

The graduate MSc research program in Rehabilitation Sciences was initially created within the Graduate Department of Rehabilitation Sciences (GDRS) in 1995, with the PhD program established in 2004. GDRS was replaced by the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute (RSI) as a EDU-B, which was established effective January 1, 2015. The research-stream graduate programs (MSc and PhD) in Speech-language Pathology previously offered by the Department of Speech- Language Pathology were administratively transferred to RSI effective September 1, 2015. The profession master's degree program, the MHSc in Speech-Language Pathology, continued to be offered by the Department of Speech-Language Pathology. That program is not impacted by this proposal.

RSI currently offers four degree programs: MSc and PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences and MSc and PhD in Speech-language Pathology (SLP). The Rehabilitation Sciences degree programs include six fields: (1) Movement Science; (2) Occupational Science; (3) Rehabilitation Health Services Studies; (4) Rehabilitation Technology Sciences; (5) Social and Cognitive Rehabilitation Sciences, and (6) Practice Science. The SLP programs currently have two fields:

(1) Language Development and Disorders Across the Lifespan, and (2) Normal and Disordered Speech and Swallowing.

The academic content of the Speech Language Pathology programs will be offered through a field in the MSc and PhD program in Rehabilitation Sciences being created through a separate major modification proposal to be approved in the Temerty Faculty of Medicine in Fall 2021 and effective as of September 2022. The new field will align fully with other similar fields/specializations in Rehabilitation Sciences (e.g., Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Movement Science and Physiotherapy, which are two other large disciplines in Rehabilitation Sciences). Note that a similar alignment exists across other rehabilitation program in Canada and US. For example the University of Alberta Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine includes all three rehabilitation fields and offers research MSc and PhD programs in Rehabilitation Sciences with Speech-language Pathology as field of research:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/rehabilitation/programs/phd-in-rehabilitation-science/index.html>

Another example from the US is the MGH Institute for Health Professions closely affiliated with Harvard University: <https://www.mghihp.edu/overview/phd-rehabilitation-sciences-program#node-55161>

This proposal is to close the MSc and PhD programs in Speech-language Pathology, effective August 31, 2027. There are several reasons to close the programs:

Rehabilitation Sciences is a multidisciplinary field with Speech-language Pathology being one of its key clinical and research areas. Although historically Speech-language Pathology was a separate program housed in a separate department within the Rehabilitation Sciences Sector, its merger with Rehabilitation Sciences Institute in 2015 provided an opportunity for streamlining Speech-language Pathology with the rest of the Rehabilitation disciplines at U of T. As part of the recent curricular review, it was decided that SLP would be more closely structurally aligned within the Rehab Sciences as a field of study instead of a separate program, resulting in the current proposal.

Recent curricular review of the Rehabilitation Sciences programs further provided an opportunity to examine the Rehabilitation Sciences and Speech-language Pathology programs in detail. This review revealed that currently all Rehabilitation Sciences students (including those in the Speech-language Pathology programs) are trained in the same way and that curricular differences between Rehabilitation Sciences and Speech-language Pathology are extremely minimal. The curriculum review also focused on enhancing program flexibility and strengthening professional development preparation in the Rehabilitation Sciences programs. The curriculum has been revised to support these goals through the same Major Modifications proposal that opens the Speech-Language Pathology field in the MSc and PhD in Rehabilitation Science.

As the Rehabilitation Sciences research programs grow in size, more and more students seek employment outside of the traditional academia. The job market for Rehabilitation Sciences graduates in the broader Rehabilitation sector within government, non-profits, and industry

is much larger than for Speech-language Pathology alone. With identical training offered by our Institute, Speech-language Pathology graduates are well positioned to compete for the same jobs as other rehabilitation professionals, and the proposed change in the designation from a program to a field will help our graduates to see themselves as suitable for these employment opportunities.

### 3 Impact on Other Programs/Units of the Proposed Closure

- Please provide evidence of consultation with any programs/units/faculties that will be affected.
- What are the positive and negative implications that need to be considered in the closure.
- Impact on the nature and quality of the division's program of study.
- Impact of closure on other units including inter-divisional and inter-institutional agreements/contracts.
- Please mention if the courses that supported this degree, program or program option will continue to be offered.

Substantial consultations with students and faculty in Speech-language Pathology and Rehabilitation Sciences preceded this proposal. This decision was discussed at the respective faculty meetings: Rehabilitation Science Institute & Department of Speech-Language Pathology, Executive & Program and Curricula Committee (PCC), Academic Affairs Committee, as well as with the students in the research PhD and MSc programs in Speech-language Pathology (survey conducted).

Positive implications noted were: (1) streamlining of Speech Pathology within other rehabilitation fields; (2) advantages in term of students finding employment after graduation within the broader discipline of Rehabilitation; (3) administrative simplification.

Through the Speech-Language Pathology Student Survey, some students expressed concern about being less competitive for academic jobs in Speech-language Pathology. However, this concern was addressed by explaining to the students that the specialization will still be indicated on the transcript in the form of a field.

There will be no impact on the nature and quality of the studies of students in the Speech-Language Pathology specialization. Both coursework and research experiences will remain as they are currently.

No impact is expected on other units including inter-divisional and inter-institutional agreements/contracts.

There are currently two courses associated with the Speech-Language Pathology program: SLP3002H, Research Methodologies in Communication Sciences and SLP4001H, Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Communication Sciences (both offered as electives), with the last enrollment 13 and 10 years ago, respectively and have been deactivated.

## 4 Student Accommodation

- Please include the current enrolment showing breakdown, by year, in the program or option being closed.

Table 1: Current Graduate Enrolment, as of August 2021

	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7
Current enrolment: MSc	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
Current enrolment: PhD	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Total	1	2	0	1	1	0	[2]*

- Provide details concerning how students in progress will be accommodated.
  - ▶ Will students be allowed to complete their program or be transferred to another program? In the latter instance, please comment on the ease with which they can complete the requirements of the new program and show evidence of consultation, if relevant.
  - ▶ Deadline by which accommodated students must complete the program—if there are grounds for concern, what are their options if they have not completed the program by that deadline?
  - ▶ Capacity/course availability to accommodate affected students.
  - ▶ Can inactive students reactivate to the closed program?
- What will the impact of the proposed closure be on the range of academic options available to students in the future (i.e., are there other programs or options that will fill the void that may or may not be created by the closure)?
- Consultation with students.
  - ▶ Please provide details concerning consultation with students around the proposed change, including:
    - meetings, town halls, emails, questionnaires
    - any response or feedback received
  - ▶ How will students be notified of the change following approval?

Consultations with the students in the SLP MSc and PhD programs were in the form of a town hall (October 2020), and survey (November 2020). Ten (out of 14) Speech-Language Pathology students (PhD=7; MSc=3) responded to the survey. To the statement: “I support merging RSI-SLP with RSI, with SLP remaining as a field with the RSI”, 2 students responded as Neutral, while the remaining student responded as either Agree or Strongly Agree. Subsequently, an email follow-up was sent to the students and their supervisors with the example of the U of T parchment/ diploma and a transcript to clarify how fields are indicated in these documents. Students were encouraged to discuss advantages/ disadvantages of transferring to the MSc and PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences versus staying in the same program with their supervisors and/or the graduate coordinator.



Currently (July 2021) there are 3 MSc and 4 PhD students (Year 4 and above; \*[2] on a leave of absence currently) enrolled in the Speech-Language Pathology program. All current PhD students in the PhD program achieved their candidacy status and are in the final phases of their thesis preparations; as such their progress towards degree completion will not be affected by this change. The effective date of closure, August 31, 2027, is aligned with when students must have completed the program according to SGS extension regulations.

There were 5 students in Years 1 and 2 of SLP - PhD in January 2021, who opted to switch to the Rehabilitation Sciences PhD program. First, these students were asked as to whether they would like to remain in their current program or transfer to the Rehabilitation Sciences program. As a result, all 5 transferred into the Rehabilitation Sciences, after consultation with their supervisors. The transfer was viewed by them as simply a formality, since the requirements of the two programs are identical, as mentioned before, and there are several advantages of a degree in Rehabilitation Sciences, which is being viewed as more general than one in Speech-language Pathology. After the new field is created, the program will ensure these students are correctly coded in systems to indicate Speech-Language Pathology as their study field.

As of January 2021, the admission to the Speech-Language Pathology program has been suspended and no new students are expected in this program.

There will be no impact of the proposed closure on the range of academic options available to students in the future, including coursework (e.g., electives - all of our students take additional elective courses beyond the minimal coursework requirements).

## 5 Faculty/Staff Accommodation

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- What is the impact, if any, on faculty and staff of the closure?

No impact is expected on faculty. The Rehabilitation Sciences Institute members who specialize in Speech-Language Pathology will continue to recruit and train their research students as in the past. There will be no effect on faculty workload or their contributions to the workings of the Institute.

## 6 UTQAP Process

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The governance pathway is summarized in the table below.

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Approvals</b>
Decanal sign-off	August 12, 2021
VPAP sign-off	August 12, 2021
Faculty/divisional council (approval of closure of minors, where there is a continuing specialist or major)	GLSE Graduate Curriculum Committee, August 17, 2021 TFOM Education Committee, September 16, 2021 TFOM Faculty Council, October 18, 2021 (pending)
Submission to Provost's office	October 6, 2021
AP&P (approval of program closures: undergrad specialists/majors; minors where there is no specialist or major; graduate fields or diploma; and collaborative programs)	January 11, 2022
Academic Board (approval of degree, graduate program, diploma closures)	January 27, 2022
Executive Committee of Governing Council (executive confirms degree, grad program, closures)	February 7, 2022
Inclusion in annual report to Quality Council	July 2022
Inclusion in annual report to MCU (in case of closure of degree)	