I’m going to graduate school to become a speech-language pathologist. What should I expect?

1. **How do I choose a graduate program?**
* You should plan to visit with others who have gone to school in the programs where you are applying.
* Campus/department tours are encouraged. It will give you a chance to meet some of the staff you would interact with, and to see the clinic facilities where you will be learning.
* The ASHA website also offers some strategies to help you select a program.
1. **What does the first year of graduate school entail?**
* You will have both classes and clients for 16 weeks in your first and second semesters.
* Each graduate clinician can expect to see four clients two times a week.
* You will have a supervisor based on his/her expertise for each client
* Each semester you will have different clients to work with, so you can gain more experience with different client cases
* The day usually starts at about 8:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.
* You are usually busy the whole day, either in the clinic, planning for therapy or in your classes
* You may have big gaps in your day but, this time is usually allotted for studying or planning therapy sessions
* The clinic coordinator sets your therapy schedule. This applies to both first and second year students
1. **What does the second year of graduate school entail?**
* You will have two to three classes the first eight weeks of each semester.
* Following the 8-week classes, you will be doing your externship. You will be working with either children or adults. If you worked with children in your fall semester you will then work with adults your second semester and vice versa. This will allow you to gain experience, and help you decide which area of the profession is of most interest to you.
1. **How much should we expect to study per week?**
* It usually depends on the material being taught
* Make sure you read in class and out of class. This is VERY important
* Every piece of information can appear on tests and your Praxis exam
* EVERYTHING is relevant. You will use every bit of information you obtain, even from guest speakers
1. **Can you choose your externship site?**
* Yes, to some extent. You can request and write a letter to your clinic supervisor and indicate the places where you would like to complete your externship.
* There is wiggle room to go outside of Tulsa, or even out of the state but be sure to let your supervisor know in advance if you are interested in this possibility.
* Be sure to meet the requirements of the program/facility you are interested in. Try to observe some in that setting to make sure it would be a good match for you.
* During some semesters, the process is more competitive since there are 5 other in-state programs which are placing people in externship settings. Your GPA, professional writing and professional network are your keys to success in getting the externship placement you desire.
* OSU has general contracts with schools, hospitals and early intervention programs.
1. **As a leveler, what undergraduate courses do you suggest to take before applying to graduate school?**
* Clinical methods and maybe even the diagnostics class would be a great benefit
1. **How did you all feel doing therapy for the first time?**
* You are not alone. Your clinical supervisor is always there to help!
* You will be given a case file, materials and notes from your supervisor. Be sure to read this information thoroughly before beginning your therapy.
* It will always be intimidating, but you are always learning .
* Always prepare for your therapy sessions in advance. Plan for more that you can accomplish in one setting so you don’t run out of things to do in your session.
* If your clinical supervisor gives you a suggestion, be sure you follow through on it.
* In terms of evaluations make sure you read through and know how to give a diagnostic test. PRACTICE ahead of time. Know it well enough to appear confident, and to adjust the testing situation to meet your client’s needs.
1. **Is the OSU-Tulsa clinic geared toward children?**
* Yes, but we have been growing and getting a lot more adults recently.
1. **How should we go about the application process?**
* Make sure you start getting your stuff together well in advance of the deadline
* The key is to be very organized
* When you ask for recommendation letters try to do it in person and follow up with that person but don’t be pushy! They are very busy people and if they are willing to write your recommendation letters, they will most likely be on top of things
* When you send everything in, make sure it is all organized. Don’t just throw papers in an envelope and send it off. Make it easy on the person reading your application!
* Recommendations from instructors you have had in CIDS classes tend to carry more weight.
* Don’t be afraid to use your employers for your references. They are the ones who see you every day and probably know your work ethic the best
* If you need to, ask more than three people for recommendation letters. Be sure to check the university guidelines before doing so.
1. **What do you feel like plays an important role in the application process?**
* There is usually a ranking system the university goes by
* Each university you apply to is probably different
* The personal statement or letter of intent is probably the most valuable piece of information. Make sure you express why you chose this career path and your passion for it. Consider using the university Career Center to help with preparing this document. PROOFREAD!!!! Have someone read your statement aloud to you so you can hear how it sounds.
1. **When do you usually hear about acceptances from graduate schools?**
* You will most probably hear back in March.
* There is a round system to it. If you do not get an acceptance at the same time as your peers, do not freak out. You may receive an offer in the second round
* You usually have to respond to a school by the requested date (usually a month and a half) to let them know you are committed to their program
* It is suggested to apply to at least three different places to increase your chances of being accepted into a program.
1. **Why did you choose OSU-Tulsa over the other schools in the surrounding areas?**
* OSU was cost effective.
* Currently, the OSU-Tulsa campus uses many adjunct instructors and clinical supervisors who bring in different perspectives and ideas because they are practicing on a day to day basis in the Tulsa community.
* TU requires three more classes in their curriculum
* The drive to NSU was not convenient
1. **Is there anything extra I need to do to practice in the school system?**
* Yes, there are three extra classes you will need if you plan to do your CFY in the public schools. Be sure to check with Dr. Giddens or your advisor for the classes you need.
* You can do these in your graduate school year also, but it would probably be best to finish them in your leveling and undergraduate years.
1. **When do you usually take the Praxis exam?**
* It is recommended that you take the Praxis exam sometime in March or April ….when you’ve finished all your graduate coursework and are also preparing to take your comprehensive exam
* Make sure you save all your class notes to review.
* There are study guides you can purchase.
* It is a paper based test with 120 multiple choice questions and you are allotted 2 hours to complete it.
* Do not wait until the last minute! There are a lot of preparation materials out there that you can work on.
* The passing score currently is 600. Only you and the testing center will know your score. Your employer is not likely to ask for your score
1. **Is there a required test to pass the OSU graduate program?**
* Yes. In order to successfully complete the OSU SLP graduate program you will take an “OSU Comprehensive Exam”
* It includes material eight different subject areas, and will most likely be essay format
* The essay questions allow you to expand on what you know.
* Some questions will be mandatory for all, and you may be able to choose some of the questions you answer.
1. **Can I do a thesis in place of the comps?**
* Yes. If you do a thesis you do not have to take the comprehensive exam.
* If you select this option, get an early start on the research project. This will be something you work on throughout your graduate program.
* Research looks really good on your resume
1. **What is a portfolio?**
* Portfolio is a class – Jane Morton is the coordinator for this at OSU-Tulsa
* This class helps you your degree requirements, helps with your resume preparation and job search, and reviews information about licensure, certification and professional ethics.
1. **What does a graduate assistantship job entail?**
* You are committed to 10 hours/week
* You will help the professor grade quizzes, copy papers and maybe even do secretarial work in the clinic
* It is VERY worth it to try and get an assistantship position
1. **What do graduate students in CDIS do to relax?**
* Ever since we started the program we have become a close knit group.
* We get together outside of school and really are there to support one another
* Don’t try to do graduate school all alone, you really need one another to build ideas off of and just to support one another