

Update on Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE): Audiology Accreditation “Of, For, and By Audiology”



James W. Hall III, Salus University; Erica Friedland, Nova Southeastern University, Martha Mundy, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill; Andy Lau, Nemours Hospital for Children; Sam Atcherson, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Abstract

The Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE) is the only accrediting body consisting entirely of audiologists with the sole responsibility for accrediting Doctor of Audiology (AuD) programs. Our review of the ACAE highlights the importance of audiologists "owning" accreditation of academic programs. We summarize rigorous ACAE standards that reflect knowledge and skills necessary for the independent and autonomous practice of audiology today and in years to come.

Introduction

The ACAE is the only accrediting body consisting entirely of audiologists with the sole responsibility for accrediting Doctor of Audiology programs. Consideration of key features of accreditation of the academic programs for other health professions offers guidance on essential principles for accreditation of Doctor of Audiology (AuD) programs. For health professions like medicine, dentistry, optometry, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, a single accreditation body is responsible for assuring academic standards for the students enrolled in education leading to the degree required for clinical practice. Merging accreditation bodies for two separate professions, such as physical therapy and occupational therapy, would be unthinkable by the professions and individual practitioners. None of these professions share an accreditation body. Generally, accreditation bodies define standards for doctoral-level academic programs. No accreditation body is responsible both for the accreditation of health professionals who practice with a master's degree and those who practice with a doctoral-level degree.

Mission

To serve the public by establishing, maintaining and applying standards to ensure the academic quality and continuous improvement of audiology education, reflecting the evolving practice of audiology.

Purpose of ACAE

- To establish rigorous educational standards for the full scope of practice for doctoral level audiologists
- To monitor and evaluate Doctor of Audiology (AuD) programs for high quality outcomes, so consistency prevails in every curriculum
- To empower audiologists to practice their chosen profession autonomously and responsibly
- To prove educational outcomes that ensure audiologists are providing the highest level of care to the public.
- To demonstrate graduates of AuD programs are ready for limited license practitioner status in the US

Key Advantages of ACAE

- Expertise in accreditation in the USA and internationally
- Continually updating standards critical in education of audiologists
- Extensive experience in and commitment to the profession of audiology and audiology accreditation
- Team consists of audiologists plus support staff working for program improvement and successful outcome
- Supportive and helpful in facilitating excellence in AuD programs
- ACAE is entirely “of, for, and by” audiologists

Categories of Current Standards

- Institutional and Administrative Structure Standards
- Mission/Goals/Objectives, Planning and Evaluation Standards
- Curricular Standards
- Didactic and Clinical Standards
- Health and Safety Standards



Summary of Current Standards

- Enhanced competencies including (but not limited to)
 - ✓ Pharmacology
 - ✓ Genetics
 - ✓ Business/personnel management
 - ✓ Patient/family self advocacy
- Additional health, safety, and patient privacy standards
- Programs demonstrate how students possess a working knowledge of all competencies as well as the ability to incorporate them into practice
- Recipients of AuD degree will have the knowledge and professional skills enabling them to function as *autonomous* direct care providers.

Conclusion

Accreditation of Doctor of Audiology programs must assure that "recipients of the AuD degree... have sound knowledge, diagnostic, treatment, communication and professional skills, including management and business acumen in order to function as autonomous direct care providers" (ACAE Standards, page 3).

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Contact Information

Andrew Stafford
Director of Professional Standards & Credentialing
American Academy of Audiology
11480 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 220
Reston, VA 20191
Tel. 202-986-9500
Email: astafford@audiology.org
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