

WHAT IS AN AUDIOLOGIST?

Audiologists test hearing and assess the nature of hearing disorders. They are responsible for the non-medical management and rehabilitation of hearing loss and associated disorders of communication.

ROLES OF AUDIOLOGIST

- Conduct interviews with patients to find out the difficulties associated with their hearing loss, including background information such as medical history
- Assess the extent of hearing loss and location of the problem using a wide range of techniques, including audiometric tests such as air and bone conduction tests
- Report results of assessment and testing in writing and make referrals to medical practitioners
- Provide rehabilitation programs which include counselling and guidance for the hearing impaired and their families
- Assess hearing levels of workers, such as pilots or members of the armed forces, when required by employers
- Prescribe, fit and evaluate hearing aids and other devices
- Provide training in communication strategies such as lip reading and in the use of auditory and other devices
- Conduct follow-up consultations after hearing aids have been fitted to make sure clients receive the clearest amplification
- Assist with the development and management of noise control and hearing conservation strategies in industry
- Act as consultants on industrial compensation claims for work-caused hearing loss
- Undertake scientific research related to sound and hearing, teach the science of audiology and its practice, direct projects and act as a consultant to other professional groups.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Audiologists are employed by Australian Hearing, major hospitals, community health centres or in academic research or teaching positions. They often work in association with medical practitioners specialising in ear, nose and throat disorders. Increasing numbers are employed in private practice and a small number in special education or industrial audiology.

It is a small occupation. Employment opportunities in both city and country locations across Australia are excellent, although there is strong competition among new graduates for positions in capital cities. Demand depends on factors such as population growth, the ageing of the population, public sector funding and policies affecting the cost of services to consumers. There are opportunities for part-time work.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

To become an audiologist you usually have to complete a bachelor degree in linguistics, physics, psychology, special education, speech pathology, science or a related discipline, followed by a master's degree in audiology.

To get into these bachelor degree external study courses, you usually need to pass your HSC Year 12. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, advanced

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English, chemistry, biology, mathematics and physics are normally required. Entry to postgraduate courses usually requires completion of an appropriate bachelor degree. The various universities have different prerequisites and some have flexible entry requirements or offer

SUPERVISION PROVIDED

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

PERSONAL SKILLS REQUIRED OF A AUDIOLOGIST

- Able to inspire confidence and cooperation
- A sympathetic and tactful approach to people's problems
- Good communication skills
- Analytical ability.

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