**ACCREDITATION OF AuD PROGRAMS**

**ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR AUDIOLOGY EDUCATION (ACAE)**

**The PREAMBLE to the 2016 Educational Standards:**

The Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE) is an independent 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization formally established in 2003 by representative members of the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) and the Academy of Dispensing Audiologists (ADA), now the Academy of Doctors of Audiology.

The mission of the ACAE is 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.

The Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) is the professional degree that is required for the independent and comprehensive practice of audiology. The Au.D. is a professional degree distinct from the Ph.D., which is specifically designed for researchers and educators. The Au.D. programs integrate didactic and clinical learning across a broad spectrum of audiology practices and work settings. The ACAE accreditation is designed for any program that offers an Au.D. degree. The ACAE expects programs of study and clinical experience to comply with the curriculum and experiential requirements set forth in the standards. The expectations are identical for all programs and include oversight of all didactic and clinical education throughout the curriculum.

The primary purpose of the ACAE accreditation is to recognize, reinforce and promote high quality performance in Au.D. educational programs through a rigorous verification process. This process will produce evidence that Au.D. programs have prepared graduates who are qualified to be doctoral-level and independent practicing audiologists. Graduates will be at the point- of-entry to the US and international health- care systems for the diagnosis and treatment of hearing and balance disorders.

Specifically, the professional at this level will demonstrate readiness for limited license practitioner status in the US.

Accreditation also assures communities of interest that graduates will be able to function according to the national scope of practice, as defined by the profession. In the 2016 ACAE Educational Standards, there are added measures and expectations in the scope of practice. New and/or enhanced competency areas found in Standard # 22 include pharmacology, genetics, business/ personnel management/finances, psycho- social impact of hearing impairment and balance disorders, empathy and active listening, self-advocacy skills for patients and families and health and infection control. Programs must now demonstrate how their students have a working knowledge of all competencies as well as the ability to incorporate them into practice.

The ACAE provides an efficient and user- friendly web-based process of accreditation that will be helpful to all of its constituents and communities of interest, including: institutions, their administration, faculty and students; regulatory agencies; the public; and other stakeholders. This integrated web-based system is the first of its kind in accreditation in the US.

The ACAE standards require Au.D. programs to use a system of competency- based assessments (outcome measures) to quantify a student’s proficiency in stated areas related to evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and management within audiology’s scope of practice. The results of these competency-based assessments will allow the programs to assist individual students and implement programmatic changes. The accreditation process is rigorous but collaborative, designed to assist programs in self-study and continuous program improvement.

The dynamic nature of contemporary health and human service delivery requires recipients of the degree in Audiology (Au.D.) to have sound knowledge, diagnostic, treatment, communication and professional skills, including management and business acumen in order to function as autonomous direct care providers. Pre- requisites for entry into Au.D. programs must include basic sciences as well as a broad education in the liberal arts. Au.D. programs will graduate generalists with broad exposure and competence in the delivery of hearing and balance services. The graduates of these programs will be prepared as critical consumers of the research that serves as the foundation for audiologic practice. Further, many will be contributors to the growth and dissemination of research and knowledge related to hearing and balance, which in turn, will impact clinical practice and service delivery.

**COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN AUDIOLOGY (CAA)**

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) accredits graduate programs that prepare individuals to enter professional practice in audiology and/or speech-language pathology. The CAA was established by ASHA and is authorized to function autonomously in setting and implementing standards and awarding accreditation. The CAA is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and by the U.S. Secretary of Education as the accrediting agency for the accreditation and preaccreditation (accreditation candidate) of education programs leading to the first professional or clinical degree at the master's or doctoral level and for the accreditation of these programs offered via distance education, throughout the United States.

The intention of accreditation is to promote excellence in educational preparation while assuring the public that graduates of accredited programs are educated in a core set of knowledge and skills required to qualify for state and national credentials for independent professional practice. Quality education can be achieved in a variety of ways, and the CAA wishes to support programs in the achievement of the highest quality possible. These standards identify basic elements that must exist in all accredited graduate education programs while allowing flexibility in the ways in which programs pursue excellence.

The CAA has identified the following six components as essential to quality education in the professions and has established its accreditation standards accordingly: administrative structure and governance, faculty, curriculum (academic and clinical education), students, assessment, program resources

Accreditation Standards The CAA has adopted the following standards as necessary conditions for accreditation of eligible graduate education programs. The CAA is responsible for evaluating the adequacy of an applicant program's efforts to satisfy each standard. Compliance with all standards represents the minimum requirement for accreditation, regardless of mode of delivery, including distance education. The CAA will evaluate programs to ensure that the program is equivalent across all modes of delivery and that students enrolled in distance education or other modes of education delivery are held to equivalent standards and afforded equivalent access to all courses, clinical practicum opportunities and supervision, advising, student support services, program resources, etc.