



**BRITISH ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY ACCREDITATION OF  
ACADEMIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE (BAA AAE)**

**Guidance Document:  
Accreditation and Endorsement  
of Audiology  
programmes/courses**

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THE BAA AAE COMMITTEE**

The British Academy of Audiology Accreditation of Academic Education Committee forms part of the BAA Education, Accreditation and Professional Development Committee (BAA EAPD). It acts as the advisory body to the British Academy of Audiology (BAA) Board of Directors and other regulatory bodies on matters pertaining to standards of academic professional education, clinical competence and practice in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. To achieve this, the duties of the Committee shall be to act as the professional reference body for the accreditation and/or endorsement of education and training programmes/courses of non-medical audiologists working in the United Kingdom. For the purpose of this document programmes refer to degree level training with a recognized educational award. Courses may refer to training offered by other training institutions.

## **2. PURPOSE OF PROFESSIONAL BODY ACCREDITATION IN AUDIOLOGY**

The primary purpose of professional body accreditation is to ensure that graduates from specific programmes are professionally qualified and competent. External accreditation of professional programmes by professional bodies is an important component of a quality assurance framework. During the process of professional accreditation a programme is assessed against predetermined criteria within certain specified categories (for example, objectives, curriculum content, resourcing, staff profile), with the aim of reaching a conclusion about whether the programme meets minimum standards set by the accrediting body. For Audiology in the UK accreditation includes theoretical and practical components.

## **3. BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION**

Professional body accreditation provides programmes with the following benefits:

- Recognition by employers of graduates
- Adherence to agreed standards
- Independent quality assurance
- Currency of curriculum content and standards
- A standard for national and international comparison
- Employment mobility for graduates

### **3.1 Value of NATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

- Ensures compliance with national guidelines and standards

- Ensures nationally compatible and comparable registration standards and qualifications
- Promotes transparency, visibility and ongoing quality enhancement
- Promotes collaboration with universities to ensure on-going improvements to programmes and response to new developments
- Promotes collaboration with accreditation systems in other countries (mutual recognition)
- Promotion of greater transnational consistency
- Provides a mechanism to audit workforce supply and demand with the aim of advising on requirements for places in universities.

### **3.2 ACCREDITATION provides service of value to several constituencies:**

To the **PUBLIC**, the values of accreditation include:

- an assurance of external evaluation of the institution or programme, and a finding that there is conformity to general expectations in higher education or the professional field;
- an identification of institutions and programmes which have voluntarily undertaken explicit activities directed at improving the quality of the institution and its professional programmes, and are carrying them out successfully;
- an improvement in the professional services available to the public, as accredited programmes modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge and practice generally accepted in the field;
- a decreased need for intervention by public agencies in the operations of educational institutions, since their institutions through accreditation are providing for the maintenance and enhancement of educational quality.

To **STUDENTS**, accreditation provides:

- an assurance that the educational activities of an accredited institution or programme have been found to be satisfactory, and therefore meet the needs of students;
- assistance in the transfer of credits between institutions, or in the admission of students to advanced degrees through the general acceptance of credits among accredited institutions when the performance of the student has been satisfactory and the credits to be transferred are appropriate to the receiving institution; a prerequisite in many cases for entering a profession.

**INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION** benefit from accreditation through:

- the stimulus provided for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional and programme improvement; the strengthening of institutional and programme self-evaluation by the review and counsel provided through the accrediting agency;
- the application of criteria of accrediting agencies, generally accepted throughout higher education, which help guard against external encroachments harmful to institutional or programme quality by providing benchmarks independent of forces that might impinge on individual institutions;
- the enhancing of the reputation of an accredited institution or programme because of public regard for accreditation;
- accreditation is also usually relied upon as a highly desirable indicator of institutional and programme quality.

Accreditation serves the **PROFESSIONS** by:

- providing a means for the participation of practitioners in setting the requirements for preparation to enter the professions;
- contributing to the unity of the professions by bringing together practitioners, lecturers and students in an activity directed at improving professional preparation and professional practice.

**3.3 The SPECIFIC PURPOSES of the accreditation process are:**

- to encourage continuous self-analysis and improvement of the educational programme by representatives of the HEI's administrative staff, teaching faculty, students, governing body, and other external stakeholders, with the ultimate aim of assuring students of quality education in this profession and assuring patients of appropriate care.
- to determine whether the educational programme meets the appropriate approved educational standards.
- to encourage the HEI to anticipate and accommodate new trends and developments in the practice of Audiology that should be incorporated into the educational process.
- to assure the educational community, the general public, and other external stakeholders that the programme has both clearly defined and appropriate objectives, maintains conditions under which these objectives can reasonably be expected to be achieved, appears to be accomplishing them substantially, and can be expected to continue to do so.

## **4. LINK BETWEEN ACCREDITATION AND REGISTRATION IN AUDIOLOGY**

Accreditation and registration are two separate and different processes. The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that a programme of study meets essential criteria in the training and education of its graduates in particular fields. Registration, however, is the licensing of the individual graduate to work as a professional. To be able to register to work as an audiologist in the UK, an individual graduate must successfully complete an accredited course and receive a recognised award as well as demonstrate relevant competencies as determined by the professional body. At present, the BAA accredits pre registration programmes in audiology on behalf of the:

- Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP)
- The Association for Clinical Scientists (ACS)

***It should be noted that accreditation can only apply to programmes/courses offered in the United Kingdom.***

### **4.1 LINK BETWEEN THE RCCP AND THE BAA ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

The Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) was formed in 2001 and it holds the Voluntary Register for individuals practising in six disciplines in Clinical Physiology (Audiologists (including Hearing Therapists), Cardiac Physiologists, Gastro-intestinal Physiologists, Neurophysiologists, Respiratory Physiologists, Sleep Physiologists). It is not directly responsible for the curriculum or competencies as these are established by the professional bodies. However, it is responsible for ensuring that providers deliver the content and curriculum. This enables the RCCP to provide an independent accreditation which is in line with recent recommendations for improvements to the regulation of healthcare.

The RCCP Professional Bodies Education Committee (PBEC) was established in 2002 and has representation from the British Academy of Audiology (BAA), Society for Cardiological Science & Technology (SCST), Association of GI Physiology (AGIP), Association of Neurophysiological Scientists (ANS) and the Association for Respiratory Technology & Physiology (ARTP). It acts as the body responsible for ensuring accreditation of pre-registration clinical physiology education programmes. It also acts as the advisory body to the RCCP Council on matters pertaining to standards of professional education, clinical competence and practice and professional development in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Two nominees from each of the constituent professional bodies' education

committees sit on RCCPPBEC. In the case of the BAA, 2 representatives from the Accreditation of Academic Education Committee attend the RCCP PBEC meetings.

It is the responsibility of the Education Provider (HEI), to approach RCCPPBEC to request accreditation for a pre registration programme. However, the relevant professional body will undertake the visit on its behalf. RCCPPBEC will appoint the Accreditation Panel (RCCPAP) and communicate with the professional bodies and with the HEI to ensure that the accreditation process is transparent, equitable and undertaken against defined criteria.

The roles and responsibilities of the RCCPPBEC for each discipline include:

- i) Setting, maintaining and raising professional standards
- ii) Prescribing of qualifications for RCCP membership
- iii) Overseeing and co-ordinating the delivery and quality assurance of professional education and training
- iv) Providing advice to all institutions offering qualifying programmes in clinical physiology

Eligibility to register with the RCCP as a clinical physiologist (Audiologist) on graduation depends on:

- i) Successful completion of an accredited programme and graduating with a named award in Audiology. *The inclusion of the title of audiology in the award is therefore limited to accredited programmes with eligibility to join the appropriate register.*
- ii) Evidence that profession specific competencies, determined through consultation between the professional body and education providers have been achieved. *These competencies should be assessable across the education providers in a fair and equitable manner to ensure that the graduate exit as fit for purpose on day one of registration. Since 2004, these competencies have been assessed through the Individual Record of Clinical Practice (IRCP).*

Pre registration programmes in Audiology are offered on both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Undergraduate programmes typically include a placement component, which supports the completion of the IRCP, contributing to the eligibility to register on graduation. Postgraduate programmes may offer a different structure as some programmes are accredited by the BAA on behalf of the Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS). Please see **Guidance Document: Registration Options in Audiology** for more information on the registration options in Audiology.

Lists of accredited HEI programme awards that lead to eligibility for registration as an Audiologist with RCCP can be found on the RCCP website (<http://www.rccp.co.uk/>). ***It is expected that the HEI will have established links with the relevant members of the profession and where appropriate, professional body, and have involved them in the design, delivery and development of all programmes.***

#### **4.2 LINK BETWEEN THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF HEALTHCARE SCIENCE AND THE BAA ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

*The BAA Board Director of Education and Training met with the NSHCS on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2015. To be updated as more information becomes available.*

### **5. PURPOSE OF ENDORSEMENT IN AUDIOLOGY**

The primary purpose of endorsement is to indicate that a specific programme/course is recognised to be offered at a suitable educational level in the profession. During the process of endorsement a programme/course is assessed against predetermined criteria within certain specified categories (for example, objectives, curriculum content, resourcing, staff profile), with the aim of reaching a conclusion about whether the programme/course meets minimum standards set by the professional body.

***Endorsement of a programme/course carries no eligibility to apply for registration as a named professional in the UK. Endorsement is normally offered to programmes/courses in Audiology, which do not include eligibility to practice as an Audiologist in the UK.***

#### **5.1 LINK BETWEEN ACCREDITATION AND ENDORSEMENT**

Accreditation applies to programmes/courses that lead to eligibility to register as an audiologist. The ability to register as an audiologist is linked to the completion of a recognised certificate of clinical competency. Endorsement of a programme/course does not lead to eligibility to registration. The difference between accreditation and endorsement is the inclusion of a measure of clinical competency. A programme/course can move between accreditation and registration through the addition or removal of a recognised and suitable measure of clinical competency. An endorsed programme/course will only be eligible to apply for accreditation if a suitable registration body is in place to allow graduates from the accredited course to be eligible to register. The flowchart on the next page indicates the link between accreditation and endorsement. ***It should be noted that endorsement normally applies to programmes/courses offered in the United Kingdom.***

# Link between Accreditation and Endorsement

