



# American Board of Audiology® Certified

## H A N D B O O K

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# Specialty, Expertise, Knowledge. Share Yours with the World by Earning an ABA Certification

The *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential is a high mark of distinction in the audiology profession. Certificants have the education and experience needed to display their *ABA Certified* credential to patients, colleagues, peers, and the community.



To learn more,  
visit [www.boardofaudiology.org](http://www.boardofaudiology.org)



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## **Welcome to the American Board of Audiology Certified Credential**

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Congratulations on taking an important personal and professional step by pursuing certification. As a professional audiologist, you deserve to be recognized and appreciated for what you do. Like most professionals, you want to become better at it. The *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential was created for audiologists looking for meaningful professional development and practical ways to evaluate professional growth.

The American Board of Audiology (ABA) is pleased to welcome you to the professional certification process. The *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential recognizes those professionals who demonstrate the knowledge and commitment to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice in audiology.

### **Professional Mark**

Audiologists who meet the eligibility requirements are awarded the certification and are entitled to use the designation *ABA Certified* or *ABAC* with their name on letterhead, business cards, and all forms of address.

### **Expedited Licensure**

Currently, the following states specifically recognize the *ABA Certified* credential for purposes of expedited licensure: Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

# American Board of Audiology®

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The ABA began granting certification to audiologists in January 1999, with the ABA Board overseeing ABA credentials. The ABA has full and final authority to judge the qualifications of each applicant for certification.

## Mission

The ABA creates, administers, and promotes rigorous credentialing programs that elevate professional practice and advance patient care.

## American Board of Audiology Certified

The *American Board Audiology Certified* credential is a program administered by audiologists exclusively for audiologists. Obtaining the *ABA Certified* credential represents a commitment to professional standards, ethical practices, and continued professional development. Certification formalizes and elevates the professional status of the audiologist to consumers, employers, health-care institutions, and public and private agencies, although no certification program can guarantee results or the quality of care provided by certificants. This certification program is open to all audiologists regardless of membership in any professional organization.

## Licensure vs. Certification

Licensure represents a government process by which a state or federal agency grants an individual permission to practice a profession and constitutes the legal right to practice that profession within the state. It is generally mandatory and must be renewed periodically. Licensure is an important form of consumer protection in that loss of an audiology license prohibits an individual from practicing audiology within the state or federal agency.

Certification, however, is generally voluntary and is not required to practice the profession. Loss of certification in audiology does not prohibit the practice of the profession, so long as licensure is maintained. Certification, however, represents a self-governing standard that serves to inform consumers, peers, and other health-care professionals of the scope of practice and training of the credential holder or certificant.

## Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics of the American Board of Audiology specifies professional standards that provide for the proper discharge of audiologists' responsibilities to those served and protects the integrity of the profession. Certificants who hold the *ABA Certified* credential must agree to abide by the principles and rules delineated in this code, which is located at [www.boardofaudiology.org](http://www.boardofaudiology.org).

## Practice

The ABA does not determine who shall or shall not engage in the practice of audiology. That a person is not certified does not indicate that he or she is unqualified to perform audiology responsibilities, only that such person has not applied for ABA certification or met ABA requirements. Additionally, one need not be a member of any particular professional organization to obtain an ABA certification.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

ABA does not discriminate against any person on the basis of color, ethnic ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, or physical disability.

## Eligibility Requirements

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To earn the *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential, you must submit a written application that includes the required documentation in each of four eligibility categories; you must agree to uphold the ABA Code of Ethics; and you must pay all appropriate fees.

### Category 1: Education

- An applicant must hold a doctoral degree in audiology granted from a regionally accredited institution.

*Documentation:*

An official transcript from the educational institution, either mailed in a sealed envelope directly to the ABA or through electronic access granted to the ABA.

### Category 2: Licensure

- An applicant must hold a current, valid license in audiology.

*Documentation:*

A copy of your current, valid license to practice audiology.

- An applicant who does not currently hold a license but is eligible to get a license may apply. The individual will need to submit a copy of the state license to the ABA within one year of earning the *ABA Certified* credential. Failure to submit proof of a valid license within one year will result in termination of certification. The individual must meet all other eligibility criteria at the time of application.

*Documentation:*

Proof of application for state licensure.

### Category 3: Mentored Professional Experience

- An applicant must have a minimum of 2,000 hours of documented, mentored professional experience as an audiologist. **Externship hours are eligible, but qualifying experience must be gained only after the completion of degree coursework.**

*Documentation:*

Form 1: Documentation of Mentored Professional Experience

### Category 4: Employment History

- An applicant must list their most recent positions held since earning a doctoral degree in audiology.

*Documentation:*

Form 2: Documentation of Work Experience

## Eligibility Requirements

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### Certification Through Reciprocal Eligibility

- A. An applicant whose graduate degree program includes courses in audiology but does not hold an audiology degree (e.g., degrees in special education, psychology, etc.) must document fulfillment of all of the following specific course requirements: successful completion of a minimum of 30 graduate-level semester credit hours directly related to audiology from a university program accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education and Accreditation; at least six of these semester credit hours must fall in the area of habilitative and rehabilitative procedures; and at least six semester credit hours must fall in the area of fundamentals of communication and its disorders. A maximum of six-semester credit hours earned for work on a thesis or dissertation may be applied to the 30-semester credit hour requirement but may not substitute for the 6-semester credit hour minimum requirements in hearing disorders and evaluation, habilitative/rehabilitative procedures, or fundamentals of communication and its disorders.

[Note: In a quarter credit system, one-quarter credit is equivalent to two-thirds of a semester credit.] If an applicant completed audiology coursework at more than one university, then transcripts from all institutions where applicable coursework was completed should be sent to ABA.

- B. Applicants must submit appropriate documentation, fees, and signed affirmations regarding the truthfulness of information, adherence to the ABA Code of Ethics, and adherence to state licensure regulations for the practice of audiology (where applicable) or other regulatory agency through which the applicant is authorized to practice audiology.
- C. Any applicant whose highest degree in audiology is from a university outside the United States must contact the ABA for further instruction.

## Application Policies

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An applicant's completed application must be submitted with the required supporting documentation and fees. Each application will be reviewed to ensure eligibility criteria are met. Once an application has been reviewed, certification may be awarded, deferred, or denied. A certificate will be issued to the applicant for a one-year period, beginning on the month of issuance when an application is approved. Applications are reviewed every seven business days.

### Incomplete Application

Carefully review your application before submission. An incomplete application will cause a delay in processing.

### Review and Acknowledgement of Application

All application packets will be thoroughly reviewed to ensure your eligibility to become *ABA Certified*. It is your responsibility to make sure the packet is complete. Candidates will be notified through e-mail that their application is received.

### Denial of Eligibility

Eligibility for *ABA Certified* may be denied when

- a. Any part of the application is incomplete or illegible
- b. Documented information does not meet the necessary requirements
- c. Application does not contain correct fees

When an application is denied for eligibility reasons, the candidate will be notified in writing. The candidate will have every opportunity to correct and submit whatever documentation is necessary to properly complete the application process and meet the minimum eligibility requirements.



## Certification Policies

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Audiologists who are awarded the *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential will receive a certificate recognizing this achievement. Audiologists holding current certification status are eligible to use the title *ABA Certified* or *ABAC* may be used in place of such written designation.

No person shall be permitted to use the designation *ABA Certified* or *ABAC* unless the American Board of Audiology has granted that certification. Persons who fail to meet requirements for recertification must cease to use the title.

### Credential Verification

Credential verification for third parties is available upon submission of an emailed request of a completed Release of Information form. Send e-mail requests to [aba@audiology.org](mailto:aba@audiology.org). Requests cannot be handled through the ABA website.

### CEU Registry

Certificants may join the American Academy of Audiology CEU Registry, or similar registry exclusively dedicated to the continuing education needs of audiologists, although it is not required. The CEU Registry is a database that tracks CEU activities.

An application form to join the Registry, along with detailed information regarding the benefits and fees, may be obtained from the American Academy of Audiology at [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org).

### Suspension and Disciplinary Procedures

1. ABA Certifications are subject to suspension or revocation by the Eligibility, Reinstatement and Recertification Committee for any of the following reasons:
  - Violation of the ABA Code of Ethics
  - Revocation or suspension of a state license or registration held by an audiologist who is certified by the ABA
  - Any act of omission deemed prejudicial to the profession of audiology
2. No certification shall be revoked unless the following procedures are followed:
  - A copy of the charges against the certificant and the information concerning the event or events from which such charges arise is sent by registered mail to the individual.
  - The notice shall state that no action will be taken against the certificant until after a hearing, unless the certificant fails to request a hearing or offer a defense within 45 days.
  - The certificant is given at least 45 days to prepare a defense.
  - A hearing is held on such charges before a designated panel, at which time the person is given a full opportunity to be heard in his or her own defense, including the right to be represented by counsel, the right to cross-examine witnesses appearing, and to examine documents material to said charges. Accommodation support will be provided to eligible individuals.
  - The panel shall initially determine whether or not certification should be suspended or revoked. The initial determination of the panel, including all evidence submitted at the hearing, shall be reviewed by the ABA Board. Upon review, the ABA Board may affirm, reverse, modify, or remand the original determination of the panel.
  - Written notice of such decision shall be issued in writing to the certificant.

## Appeals Policy

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Should an applicant disagree with a decision of the Eligibility, Reinstatement and Recertification Review Committee (ERR), the applicant may appeal to the ABA Appeals Committee.

### No Appeal Permitted

Individuals cannot appeal

- Actions taken against an individual's certification status as a result of a lack of valid audiology license
- Establishment of eligibility criteria

### Appealable Issue

An adverse certification decision may be appealed on the grounds that the ABA did not properly apply specified certification eligibility criteria or the decision was based on a factual error that affected the outcome. Adverse certification decisions include the following:

- Denial of eligibility for initial certification
- Denial of certification
- Suspension of certification
- Revocation of certification

### Appeal Procedure

An individual wishing to appeal an adverse decision, must submit a Notice of Appeal to the ABA, within 21 calendar days of receipt of the adverse decision. The Notice of Appeal *must* include the following:

- a. The grounds for appeal;
- b. The envelope from the ABA showing the postmark of the adverse decision;
- c. Any new or additional information to be considered; and
- d. Mailing address and email address where Applicant can receive communications regarding the appeal.

FAILURE TO FILE THE NOTICE WITHIN THE 21-DAY TIME PERIOD WILL RESULT IN DISMISSAL OF THE APPEAL.

### Certification Pending Appeal

An individual who appeals a decision to suspend certification, revoke certification, or deny recertification will retain the certification held at the time the appeal was filed until review of appeal has been completed.

### Review of Appeal

The Appeals Committee will conduct and complete the appeal within 45 days after receipt of the Notice of Appeal. The Appeals Committee, in its discretion, may extend the time for completing the appeal.

The written decision of the Appeals Committee, including a statement of the reasons for its decision, will be reported to the individual and the ABA. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding upon the individual, the ABA, and all other parties.

## Appeals Policy

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### Communication

Written communication to the Appeals Committee must be sent in a manner that confirms receipt (e.g., certified mail with return receipt requested or express mail with signature or delivery confirmation required), and addressed to

American Board of Audiology  
11480 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 220  
Reston, VA 20191 USA

Written communication to the individual may be sent by e-mail, regular U.S. mail, or in a manner that confirms receipt (e.g., certified mail, express mail with signature required) at the address indicated on the Notice of Appeal.

## Recertification–Maintenance

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The ABA requires that each audiologist who holds the *American Board of Audiology Certified* credential be recertified every year. The recertification requirements are designed so that *ABA Certified* certificants continue to expand their knowledge in the field of audiology and stay current on changes in the field.

### Recertification Requirements

At the conclusion of each annual certification cycle, certificants must meet the following recertification requirements:

- Completion of 20 hours of continuing education (including a minimum of five hours of Tier I continuing education and one hour in professional ethics)
- Adherence to the ABA Codes of Ethics and state licensure/registration regulations for the practice of audiology, where applicable
- Payment of required fees, currently \$75 for AAA members and \$200 for non-AAA members
- A signed statement that attests that they have conducted their practice of audiology in accordance with the ABA Code of Ethics and they have met the CE requirement for recertification. *No audiologist certified by ABA will be recertified without receipt of this signed document.*

Hours earned in excess of the hours required in each one-year certification period may not be carried over for credit to the next recertification period.

If continuing education requirements are not met within the one-year period, your certification will no longer be valid. Your status will be changed to “closed,” you may not use the term *ABA Certified*, *ABAC*, or logo with credentials, and your name will be removed from the list of *ABA Certified* certificants on the ABA website.

### Approved Content Areas for Qualifying Continuing Education

Continuing education activities must be those directed toward professionals in the field of audiology and must focus on increasing knowledge and skills in the practice of audiology in one or more of the following approved content areas:

- Amplification
- Audiologic Rehabilitation
- Diagnostics
- Ethics
- Hearing Conservation
- Hearing Science
- Practice Management
- Professional Issues
- Technology Issues
- Vestibular Assessment and Management

Continuing education activities that directly pertain to ethics include the following:

- Scope of practice
- Fair billing practices
- Other topics directly related to professional codes of ethics (Deemed appropriate by the ABA)
- Confidentiality
- HIPAA

Presentation abstracts must clearly indicate that audiology ethics are a significant part of the subject matter.

### Designation of Tier 1 Activity

Education offerings from CE providers clearly state the following:

*This activity adheres to the Guidelines for ABA Tier 1 CE Providers and Presenters Guidelines set forth by the American Board of Audiology.*

## Recertification–Maintenance

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### Approved Providers for Continuing Education

The ABA does not offer CE programs. Typically, associations or private entities provide continuing education through conferences, journals, or distance learning programs.

The ABA considers the following organizations to be approved providers: American Academy of Audiology, the American Medical Association, International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), and the American Speech–Language–Hearing Association. State audiology organizations also may be approved CE providers.

### Sources for Continuing Education

- **eAudiology:** This online learning platform of the American Academy of Audiology offers a variety of distance education web seminars that meet Tier-1 guidelines. To earn credit for the Tier-1 CE hours, a certificant must participate in the activity that incorporates interactive learning assessment. If the certificant has registered on the Academy’s CE Registry, the activity will be listed on the certificant’s continuing education transcript. This is the verification a certificant should submit if he or she is selected for a random audit at the time of recertification. Certificants who are not Academy members may submit a Tier-1 certificate participation.
- **AAA Annual Conference:** This is the annual conference of the American Academy of Audiology and it provides educational offerings that are approved Tier-1 activities. To earn credit for the Tier-1 CE hours, a certificant must participate in the activity and take a paper-and-pencil learning assessment. Academy members who are CE Registry members will find the activity listed on their continuing education transcript. This is the verification a certificant should submit if selected for a random audit at the time of recertification. For those certificants who are not Academy members, a Tier-1 certificate of participation may be submitted.
- **State Audiology Conferences**
- ***Ethics in Audiology:*** “The Green Book” is published by the American Academy of Audiology. A certificant must complete at least three CE hours for this activity to count toward ABA Tier-1 CE hours. A certificant may earn up to 11 Tier 1 CE hours (1.1 CEUs) through participating in the “Green Book” CEU program. This constitutes most of the Tier-1 continuing education hours a certificant will need for their one-year recertification period.
- **The *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology (JAAA) Online CEU Program:*** Registration includes learning assessments, some of which meet Tier-1 guidelines. Participants must submit assessment examinations for scoring and CEU credit. Submissions may be completed individually or all at once. The JAAA Online CEU Program offers instantaneous grading, correct answer feedback and automatic reporting of CEUs to the Academy. To participate in this CEU program, you must be a member of the American Academy of Audiology.
- **Authorship of a Publication:** A certificant may earn Tier-1 CE hours by authoring or co-authoring a peer-reviewed article for a major journal, or by authoring a book or a chapter of a book. For each peer-reviewed article authored and published in a major journal or for each chapter of a book, three Tier-1 CE hours are awarded. For authoring or co-authoring a book in a professional area of practice, six Tier-1 CE hours are awarded. To qualify for authorship, a contributor must have fulfilled each of the following criteria:
  1. Substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
  2. Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
  3. Final approval of the version to be published.

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public

- responsibility for its content.
- **College or University Courses:** Colleges or university courses may also be taken for Tier 1 credit provided that the course is taken for a grade and the certificant earns a “B” or higher. There is no limit on the number of hours that may be used for recertification credit by passing graduate or undergraduate courses. A transcript or grade report from the university is required for documentation.
  - **Teaching Activities:** The maximum credit that is allowed for teaching activities in a three-year period is five contact hours. Teaching activities, such as academic instruction, presentations at professional meetings, or the provision of other types of instructional programs, are eligible for recertification credit. A particular presentation may be used only once in a three-year period. Only actual presentation time may be counted. No hours are granted for preparation. A letter from the sponsor or a professional colleague that includes the course title, course description, description of the target audience, dates, the number of clock hours instruction took place, and a summary of the evaluations from the event are required documentation for teaching programs.
  - **Leadership Activities:** The maximum credit that is allowed for leadership activities in a three-year period is five contact hours. Leadership activities must provide justifiable professional learning experiences to qualify for recertification credit. Activities such as service on audiology-related boards, committees, or task forces fall into this category. Credit may only be claimed for local, state, national, or international organizations that address issues related to hearing, hearing loss, or individuals with hearing loss. A letter from the organization that documents the purpose of the organization, the capacity of the leadership role, the dates of participation, and type of service is the required.

### Random Audit of Continuing Education

Five percent of certificants are randomly selected for a Continuing Education Audit. These certificants are required to submit the following:

- Documentation verifying participation in the activities. Certificants who are audited who have participated in non-approved provider CE activities, for example audited university coursework and publications, must provide a brief summary of the activities.

**Maintaining and recording accurate records of continuing education is the certificant’s responsibility. All documentation should be retained by certificants.**

### Inactive Status

In cases of temporary disability or extraordinary circumstances resulting in extreme hardship, an ABA certificant can petition for inactive status of their certification. The individual is required to notify the ABA in writing requesting inactive status for a length of temporary disability not to exceed 12 months. The ABA specifically reserves the right to independently corroborate the reason for the underlying request. Certificants may not use the term *ABA Certified* or *ABAC* during inactive status.

### Retired Status

At its November 2018 meeting, the ABA approved a new retired status for those who are *ABA Certified*. It is intended for those who may have been *ABA Certified* since the program began in 2000 as well as more recent certificants who are contemplating retirement from the practice of audiology but want to maintain their credential while mentoring younger audiologists, consulting or guest lecturing.

No fee or continuing education is required to apply for or maintain retired status. If you hold an unrestricted license, have held ABA certification for at least three years, and attest that you are no longer working full- or part-time in any activity that requires a license, you are eligible to apply for retired status.

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