



## AuD Transition Options

As a founding principle, the American Academy of Audiology (Academy) endorsed the concept of audiology as a doctoral profession with Doctor of Audiology (AuD) as the entry-level practice degree. As we transition into this status, audiologists are evaluating their practice options.

Recently, the Academy analyzed and reported the various opportunities for audiologists (*Audiology Today*, 7:5, 15–17, 1995). This fact sheet summarizes these opportunities and recommends appropriate options for currently practicing audiologists.

State licensure boards generally require attaining a minimum of a master's degree from a regionally accredited University, passing a national examination, and completing a supervised professional experience. Licensure is the credential that legally defines the professional practice of audiology in more than 40 states. In these states, the license is the credential needed to practice except in specified exempt settings. Individual practice settings, however, may have additional requirements.

Although there are currently no additional educational requirements for maintaining the certificate of clinical competence in audiology (CCC-A):

- 1. Continue Current Practice Status**

Audiologists who are currently licensed would retain their right to practice by continuing to fulfill state licensure requirements. Under this option, practicing audiologists would use their current degree and credentials. Continuing current practice status is a reasonable, legal and defensible course of action.

- 2. Earn an AuD from a Regionally Accredited University**

Two mechanisms have been proposed to earn the AuD from a regionally accredited university:

- Return to a campus and earn the AuD through full-time on-campus study. This option is currently available.
- Earn a degree, away from campus, through distance learning mechanisms. This option may include the concept of equivalency.

- 3. Equivalency is a portfolio review performed by the degree-granting university, whereby some of the required credit may be given by the university for professional experience and continuing education.** The remaining credit required to complete the degree is earned through university-sponsored distance learning. This would be a time-limited opportunity.

Earning an AuD from a regionally accredited university endows the holder with all of the rights and responsibilities conferred by that degree.

Although the distance learning option is not currently available, the Academy is actively pursuing



this course of action.

Regional accreditation does not refer to American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Educational Service Board (ESB) accreditation. Regional accreditation is granted by university accreditation organizations such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools to recognize the university's overall academic qualifications.

4. **Obtain the Title "AuD" through Entitlement by the Audiology Foundation of America (AFA).** An Entitlement Certificate of AuD from the AFA would mean that the holder has submitted a portfolio of credentials to this Foundation. The AFA would review his/her credentials, identify areas of weakness, and propose continuing education to address deficits. The AFA then would grant to the applicant the title "doctor" and the letters AuD.

The AFA is a not-for-profit, independent, non-membership organization that has no academic or regulatory standing and is not affiliated with the American Academy of Audiology.

Entitlement conferred by the profession of optometry was issued from state licensure boards and thus has legal status.

Entitlement conferred by the profession of law was issued from accredited universities and thus has academic status.

Any title or certificate issued by an organization other than a licensure board or accredited university has no academic, legal, or regulatory value. Using the title "doctor" without an academic degree is specifically prohibited in some states. Entitlement of the AuD is not currently available.

## Recommendation from the Academy

Based on a reasoned interpretation of proposed alternatives, the Academy supports the following choices for current practitioners:

1. Continue current practice status.
2. Earn the AuD from an accredited university.

These choices have an academic and legal basis and are in the best interest of practicing audiologists, our profession, and the public we serve.

The Academy supports the AuD as an earned degree and is actively investigating opportunities for distance learning and equivalency mechanisms for current practitioners. Originally published in *Audiology Today*, Vol. 7:6, 1995