

Pre-Audiology

What Does an Audiologist Do?

Audiologists specialize in the prevention, assessment, and rehabilitation of hearing and balance disorders. They use a variety of testing devices and methodologies to measure an individual's hearing sensitivity and balance function. When disorders exist, the audiologist determines the nature and extent of the disorder and recommends appropriate treatment, including the fitting of hearing aids, cochlear implants or other assistive devices. Audiologists may also design and conduct hearing conservation programs for workers or work with school systems to ensure that classroom acoustics are conducive to learning. Some engage in research on the evaluation and treatment of disorders, and others work with industry to design hearing instruments or testing equipment.

Audiologists work closely with physicians, teachers, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, rehabilitation counselors, and other members of an interdisciplinary team, but they are autonomous and do not work under direct medical supervision.

They provide professional services in:

- private practice offices
- hospitals
- physicians' offices
- community clinics
- public and private schools
- college and university clinics
- hearing conservation programs
- state and local health departments
- state and federal government agencies
- research laboratories
- industries

Degree, Licensure and Certification Requirements

For national certification as an audiologist (the CCC-A from ASHA), a doctoral degree (AuD or PhD) is required. Although requirements for licensure vary from state to state, all states require a graduate degree, and many require a doctoral degree to practice audiology. Licensure in the State of Ohio requires a professional doctoral degree (AuD or equivalent).

Employment Outlook

Recent estimates place audiology among the top 10 'growth' professions over the next decade, and US News and World Report recently ranked audiology as one of the Top 25 Careers. Growth in the profession is attributable to many factors, including:

- the growing number of elderly Americans has caused an increase in the number of persons with hearing and balance impairments;
- mandated universal newborn hearing screening has increased the number of infants identified with hearing loss, who then need intensive early intervention services;
- medical advances are improving the survival rate of premature infants and trauma and stroke victims, who then need assessment and possible treatment for associated hearing and balance disorders;
- growth in the enrollment of special education students caused by demographic changes and federal laws that guarantee special education and related services to all eligible children with disabilities;
- the need for audiologists in private practice due to the increasing demand for direct services to individuals as well as increasing use of contract services by hospitals, schools, and nursing care facilities.

Preparing for the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Degree

Obviously, the simplest way to prepare for the Doctor of Audiology degree with professional certification and licensure is to earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited program. At Ohio State, the Department of Speech and Hearing Science offers the Bachelor of Arts (and soon the Bachelor of Science) degree. Successful completion of the undergraduate major in Speech and Hearing Science at Ohio State should prepare the student for entry into any accredited graduate program in audiology.

However, there are many other undergraduate majors that can lead to entry into the graduate program at Ohio State. Liberal arts majors offer very good preparation for graduate work in audiology as do health science majors, such as pre-medicine, pre-dentistry, pre-optometry or pre-occupational or physical therapy. Each year a substantial percentage of our incoming graduate class is made up of individuals who completed an undergraduate major outside of the discipline.

For students with undergraduate degrees in an area outside of speech and hearing science, some prerequisite courses are necessary. Generally the following courses, or their equivalent, are necessary for entry into the graduate program:

- **Principles of Phonetics** [SHS 320]
- **Language Acquisition** [SHS 330]
- **Bioacoustics** [SHS 340]
- **Introduction to Hearing Science**
[SHS 440]
- **Introduction to Audiology** [SHS 540]
- **Introduction to Aural Rehabilitation**
[SHS 734]

These courses are offered on campus; many are offered twice each year, and most are offered via distance-learning through the OSU Office of Continuing Education. Equivalent courses may also be taken at any accredited program offering degrees in Speech and Hearing Science, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, or Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Students in other majors considering graduate work in audiology may also elect to minor in Speech and Hearing Science. Students who complete Option 2 of the minor would fulfill all but two (SHS 330 and SHS 734) of the courses required for graduate study in audiology.

The Minor in Speech and Hearing Science

The minor in Speech and Hearing Science is comprised of 25 credits. Fifteen of the 25 credits are required of all students and include the following three courses, which are also required of all majors:

- A. Exploring Communication Disorders SHS230
- B. Principles of Phonetics SHS320
- C. Bioacoustics SHS340

Following the satisfactory completion of these three courses, students will choose one of four options, each of which will supply the remaining 10 credits.

Option 1. For students interested in Speech-Language Pathology.

- A. Introduction to Speech Science SHS420
- B. Introduction to S-LP SHS520

Option 2. For students interested in Audiology.

- A. Introduction to Hearing Science SHS440
- B. Introduction to Audiology SHS540

Option 3. For students interested in the field as it relates to multicultural and disability issues.

- A. Improving Intercultural Speech-Language Skills SHS310
- B. Disability Studies in Context SHS510

Option 4. For students interested in Speech and Hearing Science.

- A. Introduction to Speech Science SHS420
- B. Introduction to Hearing Science SHS440

Administration and Advising

The Minor in Speech and Hearing Science is listed in the OSU Bulletin and administered by the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Department. To declare the minor, students should call 292-8207 and make an appointment with an undergraduate advisor.