



## **Position Paper on the use of titles and qualifications by members of ACAud inc. HAASA**

The Australian College of Audiology incorporating Hearing Aid Audiology Society of Australia (ACAud inc. HAASA) members must adhere to the definitions of “audiologist” and “audiometrist” in the Scope of Practice for audiologists and audiometrists when describing their profession/qualifications.

### **To describe their profession/qualifications as an “audiologist” an ACAud inc. HAASA member must:**

1. Hold a minimum of a Master of Audiology from an Australian University (or other degree recognised as equivalent by ACAud inc. HAASA). **AND**
2. Have completed the ACAud inc. HAASA internship program (or other program/work experience recognised as equivalent by ACAud inc. HAASA<sup>1</sup>) in accordance with the ACAud inc. HAASA requirements for audiologists. **AND**
3. Be a current Full Member or Fellow of ACAud inc. HAASA who has been awarded the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and Diagnostic Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) competencies.

### **To describe their profession/qualifications as an “audiometrist”, an ACAud inc. HAASA member must:**

1. Hold a minimum of a Diploma of Audiometry from an Australian TAFE, the Australasian College of Audiometry (AuCA) (or other qualification recognised as equivalent by ACAud inc. HAASA). **AND**
2. Have completed the ACAud inc. HAASA internship program (or other program/work experience recognised as equivalent by ACAud inc. HAASA<sup>1</sup>) in accordance with the ACAud inc. HAASA requirements for audiometrists. **AND**

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<sup>1</sup> For example, applicants for ACAud inc. HAASA Full Membership who hold current clinical certification with another professional body that ACAud inc. HAASA determines is equivalent and may not need to complete the ACAud inc. HAASA internship program.

3. Be a current Full Member or Fellow of ACAud inc. HAASA who has been awarded the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) competencies.

ACAud inc. HAASA members entitled to use the title “Doctor”, or the prefix “Dr” are advised to indicate their specific degree and field of study in their post-nominals. This practice supports transparency and helps ensure clear understanding of professional qualifications, particularly in contexts where the title is used across diverse fields. Members should also comply with their university’s policies.

For example:

- Dr Edwin Hawthorne, AuD, MACAud
  - Professional Doctorate in Audiology who is a Full Member of ACAud inc. HAASA and has been awarded the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and Diagnostic Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) competencies.
- Dr Mohammed Hassan, PhD (Biology), MACAud
  - Doctor of Philosophy, majoring in Biology who is a Full Member of ACAud inc. HAASA, and has been awarded the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) competencies.
- Dr Priya Sharma, DIT, FACAud
  - Professional Doctorate in Information Technology who is a Fellow of ACAud inc. HAASA, and has been awarded the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) and Diagnostic Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) competencies.

## Rationale

Standard 5 in the Code of Conduct for Audiologists and Audiometrists requires that **members must not misinform their clients as to their scope of practice, qualifications and competencies**. In particular:

*5.1 Members must not engage in any form of misinformation or misrepresentation in relation to the:*

- a. Hearing services or devices they provide.*
- b. Qualifications, industry experience, training or professional affiliations they have.*

*5.2 Without limiting subclause 5.1:*

- a. Members must not use their possession of a particular qualification to mislead or deceive clients as to their competence in a field of practice or ability to provide services.*
- b. Members must provide truthful information as to their qualifications, industry experience, training and professional affiliations.*

Similarly, if ACAud inc. HAASA members misinform their clients as to their qualifications, training or professional affiliations they may also be in breach of the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers, which applies to health professionals including audiologists and audiometrists. Section 9 provides that health care workers are not to misinform their clients. Sections 9(1) and (2) state:

1. *A health care worker must not engage in any form of misinformation or misrepresentation in relation to the products or services he or she provides or the qualifications, training or professional affiliations he or she holds.*
2. *Without limiting subclause (1):*
  - a. *a health care worker must not use his or her possession of a particular qualification to mislead or deceive clients or the public as to his or her competence in a field of practice or ability to provide treatment*
  - b. *a health care worker must provide truthful information as to his or her qualifications, training or professional affiliations.*

### **Avoiding misinformation and a breach of the Code of Conduct when using the terms “audiologist” and “audiometrist”**

The Scope of Practice for audiologists and audiometrists of ACAud inc. HAASA defines “audiologists” and “audiometrists” in terms of the qualifications and Australian professional body requirements that must be met.

ACAud inc. HAASA acknowledges that in countries other than Australia, the terms “audiologist” and “audiometrist” may be used to describe people with higher education degrees or professional body affiliations that differ to the Australian ones. However, when practicing in Australia, members of ACAud inc. HAASA must use the terms as defined in the Scope of Practice for audiologists and audiometrists in order to avoid misinforming and misrepresenting their qualifications, training and professional affiliations. This will ensure that funding bodies, clients and other members of the public are not confused or misled as to an individual’s scope of practice, qualifications and competencies.

### **Avoiding misinformation and a breach of the Code of Conduct when using the title “Dr”**

In written materials (such as correspondence or in promotional materials), members of ACAud inc. HAASA entitled to use the title “Doctor”, or the prefix “Dr” are advised to indicate their specific degree and field of study in their post-nominals. This practice supports transparency and helps ensure clear understanding of professional qualifications, particularly in contexts where the title is used across diverse fields. Members should also comply with their university’s applicable policies.

In speech, it is important to avoid any potential confusion regarding the use of the title “Dr,” particularly when interacting with clients, funding bodies, or members of the public. In clinical settings, individuals may assume that someone using the title “Dr” is a medical or health practitioner. To maintain clarity and prevent misunderstanding, professionals are advised to clarify their qualifications where appropriate.

ACAud inc. HAASA members should therefore strive to describe their qualifications in plain English, for example by saying “I am Dr Smith, I am an audiologist with a PhD in childhood development”.

## References

Audiology Australia, Australian College of Audiology incorporating Hearing Aid Audiology Society of Australia 2024. *Code of Conduct for audiologists and audiometrists*.

<http://www.acaud.com.au/about-us/code-of-conduct>

Audiology Australia, Australian College of Audiology and Hearing Aid Audiometrist Society of Australia 2016. *Scope of Practice for audiologists and audiometrists*.

<https://www.acaud.com.au/documents/item/148>

Council of Australian Governments, 2015 *National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers* (2015).

<https://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/NationalCodeOfConductForHealthCareWorkers>

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