

# PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR AUDIOLOGISTS AND AUDIOMETRISTS

## Australian College of Audiology inc HAASA (ACAud)

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These Professional Competency Standards establish the threshold professional competencies expected of certified audiologists, audiometrists and other ACAud certified practitioners practising within their recognised scope of practice under ACAud.

The Standards define the minimum professional expectations required for safe, ethical, culturally responsive and evidence-based hearing healthcare practice across Australia.

The Standards align with the National Competency Standards and incorporate contemporary principles of:

- person- and family-centred care;
- culturally safe and inclusive practice;
- evidence-based healthcare delivery;
- communication accessibility;
- reflective professional practice; and
- workforce accessibility and public safety.

### Related Documents

- Certification & Assessment Policy
- Clinical Certification Policy
- Scope of Practice
- Code of Conduct;
- Recency and Resumption of Practice Policy
- Mandatory Declaration Policy

## **Executive Summary**

The ACAud Professional Competency Standards establishes the threshold professional competencies required for safe, ethical and contemporary hearing healthcare practice.

The Standards apply to all certified practitioners recognised by ACAud and must be interpreted proportionate to the practitioner's certification category, recognised scope of practice, professional role and demonstrated competence.

The Standards align with:

- National Competency Standards:
- person- and family-centred healthcare principles;
- culturally safe and inclusive healthcare delivery;
- evidence-based professional practice;
- workforce accessibility principles; and
- contemporary professional capability standards.

### **The standard supports:**

- internship pathways;
- certification assessment;
- professional development;
- supervision and mentoring;
- accreditation alignment;
- workforce sustainability; and
- public safety

## **Acknowledgement**

The ACAud Professional Competency Standards were developed through extensive review of contemporary professional competency standards, allied health regulatory principles and hearing healthcare competency standards across Australia.

The Standards incorporate and adapts principles drawn from:

- the Audiology Australia National Competency Standards for Audiologists;
- ACAud historic competency and certification By-laws;
- contemporary allied health competency standards;
- culturally safe healthcare frameworks;
- workforce accessibility principles; and
- contemporary professional capability and accreditation models.

The Standards were developed through consultation and review undertaken by the ACAud Education Committee, Membership Committee and Clinical Professional Excellence Committee (CPEC), with consideration given to the evolving needs of the hearing healthcare workforce, public safety, professional accountability and accessible hearing healthcare delivery across Australia.

ACAud acknowledges the contribution of Audiology Australia and the broader hearing healthcare profession in supporting the development and evolution of competency-based professional standards within Australia.

## **About ACAud**

The Australian College of Audiology Inc HAASA (ACAud) is a professional practitioner body representing audiologists, audiometrists and other recognised hearing healthcare practitioners across Australia.

ACAud supports hearing healthcare professionals working across community, rehabilitation, regional, rural, remote, diagnostic, educational, specialist and multidisciplinary hearing healthcare settings.

The organisation supports:

- professional competency and certification pathways;
- continuing professional development;
- professional standards and ethical practice;
- workforce accessibility and development;
- culturally safe and inclusive hearing healthcare; and
- collaborative hearing healthcare delivery across Australia.

ACAud supports competency-based professional practice standards designed to promote safe, ethical, evidence-based and person-centred hearing healthcare.

## **Application of the Competency Standards**

These competency standards establish the minimum threshold professional competencies expected of certified practitioners upon completion of an ACAud approved internship pathway and throughout ongoing certified professional practice.

Practitioners are only required to demonstrate competency in areas relevant to their recognised certification category, endorsed scope of practice, professional practice pathway and authorised scope of practice. All practitioners must practise within their demonstrated competence, certification status and any applicable supervision or authorisation requirements.

The competencies apply across varying scopes of practice, workplace settings, service delivery models and career stages.

Competencies must be interpreted alongside:

- recognised scope of practice;
- certification category;
- individual competency and experience;
- workplace governance requirements;
- professional judgement; and
- client-centred care principles.

Some ACAud certification categories may recognise competency within a defined or rehabilitation-focused scope of practice rather than unrestricted professional scope.

Some competency areas may require additional training, supervision, endorsement, extended competency recognition or specialist recognition prior to independent practice.

Not all competency areas apply equally across all ACAud certification categories, endorsed scopes or defined professional practice pathways. Practitioners must practise within their recognised scope of practice, demonstrated competence, certification status and any applicable supervision or authorisation requirements.

## 1. Introduction

As a self-regulating professional body, the Australian College of Audiology inc HAASA (ACAud) is responsible for supporting and maintaining professional standards that promote safe, ethical, evidence-based and contemporary hearing healthcare practice across Australia. ACAud recognises the importance of professional accountability, public safety, workforce accessibility and ongoing competency development within the hearing healthcare professions.

ACAud's Professional Competency Standards establishes the threshold professional competencies expected of certified practitioners upon completion of an ACAud approved internship pathway and throughout ongoing certified professional practice. The Standards recognise that professional competency extends beyond technical knowledge alone and includes clinical reasoning, communication capability, reflective practice, cultural responsiveness, ethical conduct and commitment to lifelong learning.

ACAud recognises that certified practitioners may practise within differing certification categories, endorsed competencies, rehabilitation-focused scopes or defined professional practice areas depending on education, assessment pathway, demonstrated competence and certification status.

The Standards also support nationally consistent hearing healthcare delivery by establishing minimum threshold competency expectations for practitioners completing internship pathways and maintaining certified professional practice.

### **The Standards recognise that competency must be responsive to:**

- individual client goals and priorities;
- evolving evidence and emerging technologies;
- communication accessibility needs;
- culturally diverse populations;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing healthcare needs; and
- safe, equitable and accessible healthcare delivery across all practice settings.

### **The Standards have been designed to support:**

- safe and effective hearing healthcare delivery;
- person- and family-centred practice;
- culturally safe and inclusive healthcare services;
- accessibility for metropolitan, regional, rural and remote communities;

- professional consistency and accountability;
- workforce sustainability and development; and
- alignment with contemporary professional and accreditation expectations.

**The Standards incorporate and align with:**

- National Competency Standards;
- historic ACAud competency structures and certification pathways;
- professional capability and reflective practice expectations;
- culturally safe and culturally responsive healthcare principles;
- communication accessibility and CALD inclusion principles;
- scope of practice and competency recognition considerations; and
- workforce accessibility and public safety principles.

## **2. Guiding Principles**

Certified practitioners are expected to provide hearing healthcare that is:

- person- and family-centred;
- culturally safe and culturally responsive;
- inclusive and accessible;
- evidence-based;
- ethical and accountable;
- trauma-informed where appropriate;
- reflective and collaborative;
- respectful of diversity;
- responsive to communication vulnerability;
- supportive of regional, rural and remote communities;
- supportive of health literacy and informed decision-making;
- supportive of equity, dignity and individual rights;
- responsive to vulnerable populations and communication disadvantage;
- collaborative across multidisciplinary healthcare settings; and
- aligned with nationally consistent professional standards.

### **3. Competency Standard Architecture**

#### **Central Professional Commitment**

#### **Safe, Ethical and Contemporary Hearing Healthcare**

All domains are underpinned by:

- cultural safety;
- CALD responsiveness;
- accessibility;
- evidence-based practice;
- reflective practice;
- professional judgement;
- communication inclusion; and
- person- and family-centred care.

### **4. Competency Domains**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Primary Focus</b>
<b>Domain 1</b>	Audiological Clinical Practice
<b>Domain 2</b>	Professional Communication and Collaboration
<b>Domain 3</b>	Education and Lifelong Learning
<b>Domain 4</b>	Quality, Safety and Compliance
<b>Domain 5</b>	Ethical and Professional Behaviour
<b>Domain 6</b>	Advocacy

## Competency Domains

### Domain 1 – Audiological Clinical Practice

Provides safe, evidence-based and person-centred hearing healthcare through the application of clinical knowledge, professional judgement and contemporary hearing healthcare practice across the lifespan.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Practice Expectation</b>
Assessment Capability	Conducts valid, reliable and culturally responsive hearing assessments using evidence-based clinical protocols and professional judgement.
Clinical Reasoning	Integrates clinical findings, reliability analysis, functional hearing impacts and site-of-lesion considerations using professional judgement and evidence-based interpretation.
Intervention and Rehabilitation	Develops, implements and evaluates evidence-based rehabilitation and management plans.
Referral and Escalation	Recognises referral pathways, red flags and limitations of scope and competency.
Reflective Practice	Uses reflective practice and feedback to continuously improve clinical capability.
Client-Centred Care Capability	Establishes goals collaboratively with clients and where appropriate, families, carers and significant others to support informed decision-making and person-centred intervention planning.
Identification and Referral Capability	Recognises hearing health needs, referral pathways, red flags and populations at risk to facilitate timely identification, escalation and access to hearing healthcare services.

## Examples of Practice

- Pure tone audiometry
- Speech audiometry
- Otoscopy and immittance
- Masking procedures
- Hearing device fitting and verification
- Counselling and rehabilitation
- Paediatric hearing assessment
- Industrial audiometry
- Referral and multidisciplinary coordination
- Screening and referral programs
- Tele audiology and remote service delivery
- Outcome measurement and review
- Shared goal setting with clients and families

## Performance Indicators

- Obtains informed consent
- Selects appropriate assessment tools
- Recognises contraindications and red flags
- Identifies unreliable responses
- Maintains calibration and infection control standards
- Adapts assessments for CALD and communication vulnerability
- Recognises psychosocial impacts of hearing loss
- Collects and analyses relevant case history and referral information
- Shares assessment findings in a manner appropriate to client communication needs
- Evaluates intervention outcomes using objective and/or client-reported measures
- Modifies assessment and intervention approaches where clinically required
- Recognises site-of-lesion considerations and functional hearing impacts
- Seeks support or debriefing following challenging clinical interactions

## Domain 2 – Professional Communication and Collaboration

Supports effective, respectful and inclusive communication and collaborative practice to facilitate safe, accessible and person-centred hearing healthcare delivery.

Core Competency	Practice Expectation
Communication Capability	Uses clear, inclusive, culturally responsive and trauma-informed communication.
Collaboration Capability	Works collaboratively with families, carers, interpreters and healthcare professionals.
Documentation Capability	Maintains accurate, compliant and professional documentation.
Accessibility Capability	Supports communication accessibility and equitable participation.
Interprofessional Collaboration	Collaborates respectfully and effectively with healthcare professionals, organisations, carers and support networks to optimise client outcomes.

### Examples of Practice

- Obtaining informed consent
- Using interpreters where appropriate
- Preparing reports and referrals
- Supporting shared decision-making
- Telehealth communication
- Family-centred communication

### Performance Indicators

- Adapts communication for hearing, cognitive and language needs
- Uses respectful and inclusive language
- Supports health literacy
- Maintains confidentiality and privacy obligations
- Recognises communication vulnerability
- Uses verbal and non-verbal communication effectively
- Explains terminology and clinical information clearly

- Considers environmental factors impacting communication effectiveness
- Uses social media and digital communication responsibly
- Retains evidence of professional communication appropriately
- Produces accurate, meaningful and complete clinical documentation
- Recognises and manages challenging conversations respectfully
- Supports shared decision-making processes
- Documents informed consent appropriately, including verbal and written consent requirements.

## Domain 3 – Education and Lifelong Learning

Maintains and develops professional capability through continuing professional development, reflective practice, evidence-informed learning and ongoing professional growth.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Practice Expectation</b>
CPD Capability	Participates in ongoing continuing professional development and lifelong learning.
Reflective Capability	Engages in reflective, evidence-based and self-directed professional practice.
Mentoring Capability	Supports supervision, mentoring and workforce development.
Knowledge Development	Contributes to contemporary professional knowledge and quality improvement.

### Examples of Practice

- Professional development activities
- Peer review and mentoring
- Digital literacy and emerging technologies
- Student supervision
- Professional presentations
- Research participation
- Evidence review and appraisal
- Development of professional learning plans

## Performance Indicators

- Maintains contemporary clinical knowledge
  - Participates in reflective practice
  - Identifies learning needs
  - Engages in peer review
  - Supports supervision and mentoring
  - Uses literature, mentorship and continuing education to support learning
  - Participates in critical appraisal of emerging evidence
  - Identifies gaps in professional knowledge
  - Maintains digital literacy relevant to hearing healthcare practice
  - Participates in ACAud CPD requirements
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- Uses self-reflection, feedback and performance review to identify professional development needs.

## Domain 4 – Quality, Safety and Compliance

Supports the delivery of safe, effective, compliant and high-quality hearing healthcare services through adherence to professional standards, workplace requirements and continuous quality improvement principles.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Practice Expectation</b>
Quality Improvement	Participates in continuous quality improvement and outcome evaluation activities.
Safety Capability	Maintains infection control, equipment and workplace safety standards.
Compliance Capability	Complies with legislation, standards, workplace policies and professional obligations.
Workplace Wellbeing	Supports safe, respectful and sustainable workplace environments.

## Examples of Practice

- Calibration and equipment maintenance
- Risk management procedures
- Clinical record security
- Audit and compliance activities

- Infection control procedures
- Complaints management
- Workplace health and safety compliance
- Incident reporting and escalation
- Clinical environment modification

## Performance Indicators

- Maintains safe clinical environments
- Recognises and escalates safety concerns
- Maintains secure clinical documentation
- Supports continuous improvement
- Participates in audit and compliance processes
- Utilises effective strategies to support professional wellbeing, workload management and sustainable practice.
- Complies with professional, legal and statutory obligations
- Complies with complaints, incident management and quality improvement processes and takes appropriate action to address service delivery concerns
- Maintains environments appropriate for clinical assessment and rehabilitation
- Adheres to occupational health and safety requirements
- Uses risk management principles in clinical practice
- Supports client rights to high-quality care and optimal outcomes

## Domain 5 – Ethical and Professional Behaviour

Promotes ethical, accountable and culturally safe professional conduct that upholds public trust, professional integrity and responsible hearing healthcare practice.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Practice Expectation</b>
Professional Integrity	Demonstrates honesty, accountability and ethical professional conduct.
Scope of Practice	Practises within individual competency, certification and recognised scope.
Professional Conduct	Maintains respectful professional relationships and boundaries.
Cultural Safety	Demonstrates culturally safe and inclusive professional behaviour.

## Examples of Practice

- Conflict of interest management
- Ethical decision-making
- Code of Conduct compliance
- Professional accountability
- Professional representation
- Ethical marketing and advertising
- Managing professional judgement and bias
- Escalation of professional concerns
- Workplace professionalism and respectful conduct

## Performance Indicators

- Recognises limitations and seeks support
- Maintains respectful workplace conduct
- Supports culturally safe practice
- Demonstrates respect for diversity, cultural identity, individual rights and communication needs.
- Recognises conflicts of interest
- Maintains professional boundaries
- Prioritises client interests above commercial gain
- Supports client dignity, rights and autonomy
- Escalates concerns regarding unethical practice where appropriate
- Maintains ethical advertising and professional representation
- Maintains professional conduct across digital platforms and social media environments.
- Recognises the impact of personal behaviour on others
- Demonstrates accountability for professional actions

## Domain 6 – Advocacy

Promotes equitable access, communication inclusion and community wellbeing through advocacy, professional engagement and support for accessible hearing healthcare services.

<b>Core Competency</b>	<b>Practice Expectation</b>
Access and Equity	Advocates for accessible, inclusive and equitable hearing healthcare.
Community Support	Supports vulnerable and underserved populations.
Cultural Advocacy	Supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD hearing healthcare accessibility.
Professional Advancement	Contributes to workforce sustainability and professional development.
Professional Advocacy	Promotes positive awareness, understanding and advancement of the hearing healthcare professions.

### Examples of Practice

- Community education
- CALD and Indigenous advocacy
- Works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations to support culturally safe hearing healthcare access and outcomes.
- Regional and remote access initiatives
- Public hearing health promotion
- Workforce mentoring
- Policy and stakeholder engagement
- Public awareness campaigns
- Professional representation
- Community partnership initiatives
- Workplace advocacy

### Performance Indicators

- Recognises barriers to care
- Supports communication accessibility

- Promotes culturally responsive hearing healthcare
- Supports regional and remote access
- Advocates for vulnerable populations
- Raises awareness of hearing and communication needs
- Supports individuals to participate fully within their communities
- Works with organisations, communities and policymakers to improve hearing healthcare access
- Advocates for culturally safe hearing healthcare resources
- Advocates for safe and equitable workplaces
- Promotes positive public understanding of hearing healthcare professions

## Scope of Practice Application

Competency Area	Audiometrist	Audiologist	Extended Compet	Specialist Competency Recognition
Diagnostic Audiometry	✓	✓		
Hearing Rehabilitation	✓	✓		
Hearing Device Fitting & Verification	✓	✓		
Paediatric Hearing Assessment	✓ (within competency and scope)	✓	✓	Specialist
Tinnitus Assessment & Rehabilitation	✓	✓	✓	Specialist
Vestibular Screening & Assessment	Some Audiometrists	✓	✓	Specialist
Cerumen Management	✓	✓	✓	
Industrial Audiometry & Hearing Conservation	✓	✓	✓	
Compensation & Medico-Legal Reporting	✓ (within competency)	✓	✓	Specialist
Cochlear Implant Rehabilitation & Support	Support/Refer on	✓	✓	Specialist
CAPD Screening		✓	✓	
CAPD Diagnostic Assessment		✓		Specialist
Electrophysiology		✓	✓	Specialist
Consultant Clinician / Clinical Adviser Roles	✓	✓	✓	Specialist

## Extended and Specialist Competencies

Extended Competencies	Specialist Competencies
Paediatric hearing services	Cochlear implant rehabilitation
Vestibular assessment	Electrophysiology
Tinnitus rehabilitation	Advanced vestibular practice
Cerumen management	Complex paediatric practice
Industrial audiometry	CAPD assessment

## Application of Competencies in Certification

These Professional Competency Standards form the basis of competency assessment within ACAud approved certification and internship pathways.

Applicants undertaking certification, internship, competency recognition, extended competency recognition or specialist competency recognition pathways may be assessed against relevant competency domains and performance indicators to determine professional capability and eligibility for certification.

The Standards also support:

- continuing professional development;
- reflective professional practice;
- supervision and mentoring;
- recency and resumption of practice considerations;
- scope of practice recognition; and
- professional conduct and quality assurance processes.

## Glossary of Terms

### Audiologist

A tertiary-qualified hearing healthcare professional who has completed recognised education, clinical training and competency-based internship pathways. Audiologists provide hearing assessment, diagnostic audiometry, complex diagnostic assessment, hearing rehabilitation, tinnitus management, auditory and vestibular services, communication support and hearing healthcare services within their individual scope of practice, competency, training and experience.

### Audiometrist

A Diploma or Bachelor-qualified hearing healthcare professional who has completed recognised education, clinical training and competency-based internship pathways. Audiometrists provide hearing assessment, diagnostic audiometry, hearing rehabilitation, communication support and hearing device management services within their individual scope of practice, competency, training and experience.

## **Certified Practitioner**

A practitioner who has met the competency, certification and professional practice requirements determined by ACAud for the relevant membership or certification pathway.

## **Clinical Certification**

The formal recognition by ACAud that a practitioner has demonstrated the required professional competencies for independent clinical practice within an approved scope of practice.

## **Communication Vulnerability**

Circumstances where an individual may experience barriers to communication due to hearing loss, language, disability, cultural background, cognitive changes, health literacy or other factors impacting communication access.

## **Competency**

The demonstrated combination of knowledge, skills, professional judgement, behaviours and professional attributes required to practise safely, effectively and ethically.

## **Competency-Based Practice**

A professional practice approach where practitioners demonstrate and maintain the competencies required for safe, ethical and effective hearing healthcare practice.

## **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Ongoing learning, education, reflective activities and professional development undertaken to maintain and improve professional knowledge, skills and competency throughout professional practice.

## **Cultural Safety**

An environment and approach to healthcare in which individuals and communities feel respected, safe and free from racism, discrimination or judgement. Cultural safety is determined by the individual and community receiving care.

## **Evidence-Based Practice**

The integration of current best evidence, professional expertise, clinical reasoning and the needs, preferences and circumstances of the individual receiving care.

## **Extended Competency Recognition**

Recognition of additional professional competencies, training or experience beyond threshold certification requirements within a defined area of hearing healthcare practice.

## **Hearing Rehabilitation Audiologist (HR Audiologist)**

A Hearing Rehabilitation Audiologist (HR Audiologist) is a practitioner certified by ACAud within a defined rehabilitation-focused scope of practice aligned with the Hearing Rehabilitation Specialist (HRS) scope of practice. The HR Audiologist category does not include the broader diagnostic rehabilitation scope of practice recognised for ACAud Audiologist certification.

## **Person-Centred Care**

Healthcare that respects and responds to the individual preferences, needs, values and goals of the person receiving care, while supporting informed decision-making and collaborative participation.

## **Reflective Practice**

The ongoing process of reviewing experiences, decisions and professional practice to support learning, professional growth and continuous improvement.

## **Scope of Practice**

The areas of professional activity, responsibilities and clinical practice that a practitioner is educated, competent and authorised to perform.

## **Specialist Competency Recognition**

Recognition of advanced or specialised professional competencies within a particular area of hearing healthcare practice requiring additional experience, education, training or demonstrated expertise.

## **Supervision**

A structured professional support process involving oversight, guidance, mentoring, feedback and competency development provided by an appropriately experienced practitioner.

## **Tele-audiology**

The delivery of hearing healthcare services using telecommunications or digital technologies to support assessment, rehabilitation, monitoring, education or consultation.

## **Trauma-Informed Care**

An approach to healthcare that recognises the potential impact of trauma and seeks to promote emotional safety, respect, trust and supportive care interactions.

## **Vulnerable Populations**

Individuals or communities who may experience increased barriers to healthcare access, communication, equity, safety or wellbeing due to social, cultural, economic, geographic, health or other factors