

AUDIOLOGY STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS RESOURCE PACKET

SAA Chapter & Member Relations Committee

Applying to Graduate School

Congratulations on starting the process towards a career in audiology! Audiologists with hearing loss bring a unique perspective to the field, and can evoke a high standard of patient care based on their own experiences. As you work through the application process, there are several factors that can be considered to help make this transition easier.

Taking the GRE¹

One of the first steps that all students applying to Doctor of Audiology programs must take is completing the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Educational Testing Service (ETS), the creators of the GRE, provide test day accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are Deaf or hard-of-hearing and have valid medical documentation proving these conditions, you are entitled to accommodations on the GRE. The steps to submitting an accommodations request are outlined below.

1. [Create an account](#) on the GRE portion of the ETS website.
2. Go to the 'My GRE Home' page and see the 'Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs' section in the second column on the right.
3. Click on the 'GRE Accommodation Application Status/New Request' link. Here you will complete an Accommodation Application where you will choose the specific accommodations that you are applying for.

Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs

[More Information](#)

[GRE Accommodation Application Status/New Request](#)

You will need to submit a 'Certification of Eligibility: Accommodations History Form' only (no additional documentation) if you are requesting the following accommodations:

- Listening section omitted (TOEFL iBT® and paper-delivered test)
- Speaking section omitted (TOEFL iBT test only)
- 50 percent extended testing time (time and one-half)
- Extra break(s)
- Printed copy of spoken directions
- Sign language interpreter (for spoken directions only)
- Oral interpreter (for spoken directions only)

If you are requesting additional accommodations, such as 100 percent extended testing time (double time), you will need to submit additional documentation. It is recommended

¹ "The GRE® Tests." ETS, www.ets.org/gre.

that you begin this process as early as possible to ensure the accommodations request is approved before you schedule your test date. It can take four to six weeks for ETS to process an application.

Once you have been approved for accommodations, you will receive an official approval letter from ETS that includes instructions on how to schedule your test. You should not register to take a computer-delivered test until you have received your authorization letter with details regarding which accommodations are available to you on your test day. It is also a good idea to call the testing center the day before you are scheduled to take the GRE, to confirm that the testing center has your documentation approval and is ready to accommodate you on test day.²

Applications and Interviewing

One of the most important and personal decisions you will make during the application process is whether or not you want to disclose your hearing loss to the universities to which you're applying. Some students choose to disclose their hearing loss in their letter of intent or during their interviews, but the decision is yours.

If you do choose to disclose your hearing loss during the admissions process, be prepared to express (some of) the following points listed below:

- How your hearing loss is, or has become, a strength
- How you are prepared and equipped to overcome any challenges that may come your way as an aspiring professional with hearing loss
- How your experiences with hearing loss have influenced your decision to pursue a career in audiology

Your experiences with hearing loss can be used to demonstrate how you will be able to better relate to patients, and develop more effective counseling strategies.

For an additional resource on the application process, please see the [Applying to Audiology Graduate School Packet](#).

Requesting Accommodations in Graduate School

Now that you have made it through the application process and decided on a program, you can focus on getting the most out of your academic and clinical experiences. Depending upon your university, certain accommodations are available to students who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, and can be granted by registering with the disabilities office

² "Bulletin Supplement for Test Takers with Disabilities or Health-Related Needs" *ETS*, https://www.ets.org/s/disabilities/pdf/bulletin_supplement_test_takers_with_disabilities_health_needs.pdf

at your school. Some of the most common accommodations for Deaf or hard-of-hearing students are listed below.

- Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)
 - This can decrease difficulties associated with increased distance between you and the professor, or increased ambient noise or reverberation in the room. Using an ALD can improve the signal-to-noise ratio for you.
- Wireless microphone technology such as FM and DM systems
- Notetakers for lectures
 - Professors or disability advisors may send out an email at the beginning of the semester to ask for a volunteer to share a copy of his or her notes with you. This email can be done anonymously if you choose.
- Supplemental notes
 - PowerPoint presentations can be provided before the lecture, which may allow for you to better stay on track while taking supplemental notes for further understanding.
 - It's recommended that you speak with your professor to ensure that these notes are also provided for guest lecturers.
- [Phone applications](#)
- Request permission from professors to record lectures
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
- [C-Print](#) - Transcription Services
- Sign language interpreter
- Captioning on classroom presentation videos
- Preferential seating
- Extended time on examinations
- Quiet test taking environment

Before you reach out to the disabilities office, do some research online to see what accommodations your program offers, and which accommodations would be beneficial for you. Meeting with a disability advisor can help you determine which accommodations will help you gain equal access.

Registering with the Disabilities Office

It is recommended that you contact the disabilities office at your graduate school as soon as possible (i.e., before you start classes). This allows for time to collect documentation and for proper, reasonable accommodations to be put into place. Most university's disabilities offices can be found online.

Most students find it helpful to schedule a meeting to get to know their disability advisor and discuss accommodations. Some schools may also require you complete an online

application or you have an in-person meeting with your advisor. It is important that you are prepared to provide appropriate documentation of the diagnosed disability.

- You will likely have to provide an audiogram and report from an audiologist.
- If you were registered with the disabilities office during your undergraduate degree, you may be able to transfer your records from that institution to your new school. Ensure that this is permissible and allow for plenty of time for this process to occur.

Again, it is important to begin this process far in advance to ensure that your accommodations are activated in time.

Before Classes Start

After you have registered with your disabilities office and received the necessary documentation to continue, make sure you understand how and when to notify faculty and staff about your accommodations. Some schools may have you contact your professors via an online portal, while other schools may have a written letter for you to distribute to your professors.

It's recommend to contact your professors and preceptors at least one week before the start of the semester or trimester. Contacting them via email allows you to attach the appropriate documentation and have everything noted in writing. You can CC your disability advisor on this email as well, creating a paper trail in case documentation is needed later.

On the first day of classes and clinic, introduce yourself to your professors and preceptors. Individuals with hearing loss find different accommodations helpful in different situations. Allowing for clear communication can help both parties understand how to work together and solve any potential issues. This may be a learning opportunity not only for you, but also your professors and/or preceptors.

Other Associations to Get Involved With

You are not alone as an aspiring audiologist and professional with hearing loss. A National Survey for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Audiologists and Audiology Students found that there are at least 158 audiologists or audiology students with hearing loss in the field currently.³ There are national groups available for students, audiologists, and professionals with hearing loss to network.

³ Atcherson, Samuel R, et al. "National Survey of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Audiologists and Audiology Students." *National Survey of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Audiologists and Audiology Students*, www.ualr.edu/sratcherson/nationaldhhaudiologysurvey.html.

Association of Audiologists with Hearing Loss (AAHL)

AAHL is comprised of Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiologists and audiology students. The group interests include accessibility issues, personal and professional accommodations, networking, and mentoring. The group has been hosting annual meetings at the AAA Conference since 2002, and continues to serve as a resource for audiologists with hearing loss.

Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss (AMPHL)⁴

Similar to AAHL, the AMPHL provides information and a network for individuals interested in or working in healthcare with hearing loss. The goal is to promote advocacy and mentorship with healthcare professionals. AMPHL recently launched a [statistical registry](#) to collect statistics on Deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals in the medical field.

A unique feature of AMPHL is the ability to enter a mentorship program as either a mentor or mentee to another medical professional with hearing loss. To join this mentorship program, send a request [here](#) and you will be contacted within a few weeks with contact information for your mentorship.

Networking

Outside of national associations such as AAHL and AMPHL, there are various in-person networking events for audiology students with hearing loss to participate in. These experiences can be a great opportunity to meet other students with hearing loss and exchange ideas, issues, or strategies for improvement in the field. As aspiring audiologists with hearing loss, you have a unique perspective on the field. Meeting at networking events can help you brainstorm ways to further contribute to audiology while learning from your experiences as a patient.

Conference Meetings

The AAHL hosts an annual Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Audiologists meeting at the annual AAA conference for both students and professionals with hearing loss. This meeting is also open to faculty and preceptors working with students who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The noticeable growth in attendance each year shows how audiologists and students are seeking these opportunities to network and exchange ideas about their unique perspectives.

This year at AAA 2018, the first annual Students with Hearing Loss meeting was held, to compliment the AAHL Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Audiologists meeting. Forty-six audiology students with hearing loss attended. Resources on various topics related to being Deaf or hard-of-hearing were presented and discussed along with new social media networking mediums.

⁴ Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Losses, amphl.org/.

Social Media

The SAA Chapter and Member Relations Committee has created a group specifically for Deaf or hard-of-hearing students, to allow students with hearing loss to connect with one another outside of the conference setting. To join this group, please see the Student Academy of Audiology Facebook page [here](#) and request to join!

