

APPLYING FOR AUDIOLOGY GRADUATE SCHOOL



Member Relations Committee

Table of Contents

CONGRATULATIONS!	3
WHY AUDIOLOGY?	3
EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS	4
HOW TO APPLY FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL	4
WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN AUD PROGRAM	6
WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PHD PROGRAM	7
WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN AUD/PHD PROGRAM	8
WHAT IS ACCREDITATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	9
THE APPLICATION PROCESS	9
FAQS & RESOURCES	13
REFERENCES	17

Congratulations... on considering a career in audiology!

Audiology is an exciting and growing profession with a high demand for many dedicated clinicians. Your interest in the profession will be well-rewarded. The three to six years of graduate school will provide you with the experiences necessary to enter a variety of settings. It is up to you to decide what your specific audiology passions are!

This informational packet was most recently updated by the 2022-2023 SAA Member Relations Committee, composed of audiology students interested in helping fellow students succeed. It is best to reference each program's application requirements for precise and up-to-date instructions, but it is our hope that this packet is your resource for first-hand, experience-based advice. Happy applying!

Why Audiology?

"I wanted to be a doctor but also really enjoy creating long-lasting relationships and improving quality of life, all of which audiologists get to do!"
-Allison, Indiana

"I have worn a hearing aid all my life, I wanted to use my own experience to benefit others! This is also a perfect field for me that combines problem-solving, personal relationships, and service in the medical field."
-Shannon, North Carolina

"My older brother wore hearing aids and the impact they made on our family's communication was so profound. Now I get to help other people experience better communication?"
-Lindsey, Ohio

"I chose audiology because it is a growing field with a lot of new innovation, areas of discovery, and ability to make a positive impact on people's lives." -
Sophia, Texas

"I chose to pursue the field of audiology because I grew up with a background in music and I was fascinated by how the brain and auditory system perceive sound. Through my experiences, I have discovered my passion for Pediatric Audiology. The experiences I have gained as a graduate student have provided me with clinical skills, academic knowledge, and an irreplaceable devotion to the field of audiology."
- Liz, Ohio

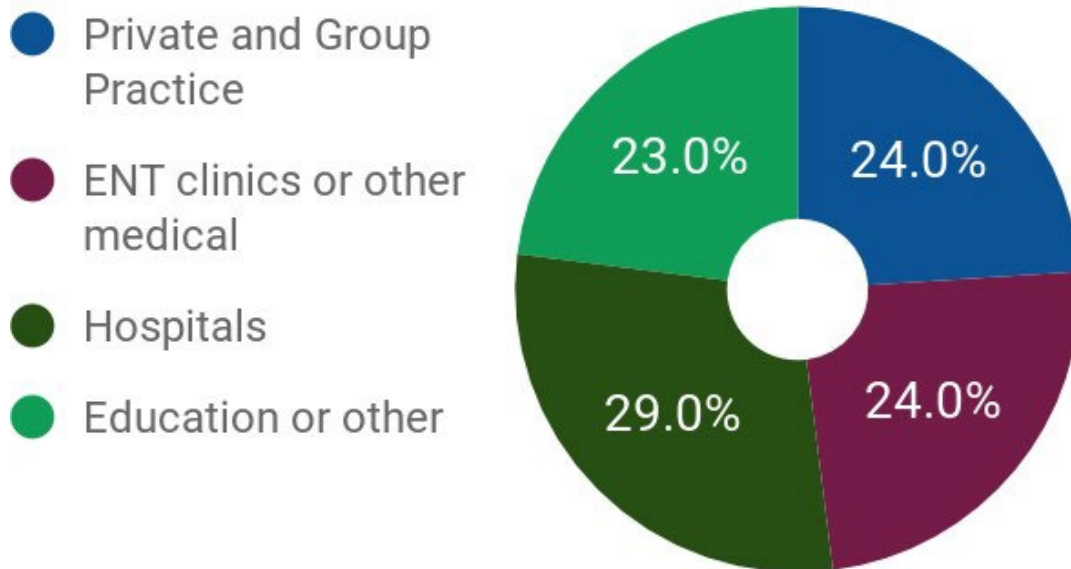
Scope of Practice

Hearing and balance disorders are diagnosed, treated, and (re)habilitated by an audiologist. These disorders have physical, psychological, social, educational, and employment implications for patients. Treatment services require that audiologists are knowledgeable on existing and emerging technologies, evidence-based practice, and interpersonal skills to counsel and guide patients and their family members through the (re)habilitative process.

For more information, view the American Academy of Audiology's full statement on the [scope of practice](#).¹

Employment Settings

Source: SAA.audiology.org



For further information on each of these categories, visit the SAA's [website](#) which details the various employment settings for audiologists.²

How to Apply for Graduate School

Audiology is a rapidly-growing profession, and graduate school admissions can be competitive. This indicates that future audiologists will likely be plentiful, dedicated, and hard-working. If you are passionate about audiology, do not be afraid to apply! This document includes suggestions from successful applicants (current and past AuD and PhD students) in each section. Remember, the best application is an honest application that puts your best foot forward.

General Application Requirements

Audiology programs require an application to their program (which could be through the university’s website or the Centralized Application Service for Communication Science & Disorders Programs [[CSDCAS](#)³]), a personal statement, university transcript(s), Graduate Record Examinations (GRE®) scores, and letters of recommendation from academic or clinical faculty or other character references. Note that this is a summary of typical application requirements; check with the individual graduate school for their specific application requirements.

These application components require time, effort, and reflection to depict an accurate portrayal of your experiences and strengths, as well as outlining your goals and whether they align with specific graduate programs. Be sure to give yourself enough time to research, develop, and execute your program search and application(s) to ensure success.

The graduate school timeline below is a suggested timeline for application planning based on typical graduate school program applications. It is important to reference the application process for each program for specific deadlines and materials required.

Suggested Graduate School Timeline	
Take the GRE	Summer or early fall
Research prospective schools	August, if not sooner. Keep the tips in the following sections in mind when looking at schools.
Decide on programs to apply to	August-October
Prepare application materials	September-December
Applications due*	December 1-February 15
Interviews	December- February
Graduate school offers	February- March
Acceptance/denial of offers	April 15
Graduate programs begin	August/September

Tip! Try to make yourself a to-do list for each month with general timeline requirements on them.

*Specific application due dates are listed by each university; deadlines may differ from the general date ranges listed above.

[CSDCAS](#),³ the Centralized Application Service for Communication Sciences and Disorders & Programs, is a single application process used to apply to various universities. Created and operated by the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Science and Disorders (CAPCSD), it reduces busy work and redundancy by allowing you to enter certain parts of your application that all schools have in common, while also containing school-specific submission information as part of their system. They provide instructions on how to complete and submit your application for participating graduate schools. If a university is not listed in CSDCAS, their application will likely be found on their website.

What to Look For in an AuD Program

When considering an AuD program, it can be helpful to identify ideal future employment settings (e.g., private practice, research, schools, hospitals, industry) and patient populations (e.g., pediatrics, geriatrics, trauma, medical, vestibular, cochlear implants, tinnitus) and search for an audiology program that offers clinical opportunities in that area. If you are unsure of your current audiology interests, like a majority of first-year audiology students, search for a program that offers the best “all-around experience”; that is, a comprehensive set of clinical sites and coursework. Your clinical experiences are valuable for developing your interests and skills and gaining experience to become a high-quality audiologist.

Tip! Look up the rankings of your potential schools online to compare or have at least one ambitious school and at least one safety school.

Once you have narrowed your list to a few programs, it is highly recommended to schedule a campus visit. This visit can take place before the application process, during the on-site interview (if applicable), or after acceptance. There is a lot you can learn by speaking with the faculty and students rather than simply viewing the program’s website. Consider emailing the department administration to schedule a prospective student visit, whether in person or virtually. Additionally, many programs hold “prospective student” visits.

Finding the right program for yourself is essential. The Academy has provided [a list of all AuD and PhD programs](#) to help make the process of finding a program a little bit easier.⁴

Considerations:

These are ideas to be explored with program contacts; think about what is important for you to decide which programs to apply to. Keep in mind there is no “perfect program”, it is all about finding the best fit. Below are ideas for questions to ask depending on important program aspects to you:

- What types of students typically succeed in this program?
- How does the program promote diversity and inclusion?
- How is the curriculum throughout the AuD structured?

- What are the goals for students upon graduation and how does the faculty help them achieve these goals?
- What clinical experiences are offered throughout the program?
- When do students begin to actively participate in clinical rotations?
- Where are clinical placements completed?
- Is there a capstone/research component? What is that process?
- For the externship process, am I solely responsible for communicating with the sites, or is there a faculty member that is responsible for communicating with the sites on my behalf?
- Are there any research opportunities available?
- Are there assistantships available for audiology graduate students? How many per year?
- What accommodations are provided for students with disabilities and how do I begin that process?
- How much experience will I gain in (insert specific area of interest; e.g., pediatrics, cochlear implants, vestibular)?

What to Look For in an PhD Program

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in audiology are available [across the United States](#).⁵ The length of the program can range from approximately four to six years.

Why a PhD?

A PhD gives you a research knowledge base and expertise to complete research as a principal investigator at a university, hospital, private practice, industry, or other setting, participate in administration, or consult on your area of interest. A PhD can provide additional opportunities in your audiological area(s) of interest outside of the clinic.

Individuals with a PhD in audiology, speech and hearing sciences, or communication sciences and disorders primarily begin their post-graduate career in [academic-faculty positions](#).⁶ If practicing clinically is part of your career goals, ask every PhD program you apply to about getting a PhD with clinical licensure, how it works at that university, or if it is possible.

Can I apply for a PhD?

Past research experience is not required to apply to a PhD program. Just like AuD programs, look at each university's application process before applying, as they all differ to some degree. If you are interested in a PhD, start by contacting programs and potential future advisors.

How do I decide on a program and apply for a PhD?

1. **Decide on your research area of interest** that you would want to focus on during your PhD. A PhD involves four or more years of learning research methodologies, often in a very focused area. Finding the specialty within audiology that can sustain your interest and passion throughout your degree and career is critical. Your chosen research area will also guide you to your potential research advisor.
2. **Research potential advisors** who perform research in your area of interest; create a short list of people to contact. Your research advisor will be your main point of contact throughout the PhD program; it is vital to have open communication and work well together. Many programs will not accept PhD applications without prior approval from a research advisor. Reach out to your short list of potential advisors to introduce yourself via email, include a short summary of your background and interests in the field, and to ask if they have interest or availability for a PhD student. Express your interest in their research and your desire to learn about the application process at that university. They will likely lead the discussion from there. Also look at your potential advisor's previous projects, sources, and consistency of grant funding. Many PhD students participate in grant writing with their advisor to find funding for their studies. It would be ideal to learn from an advisor who can consistently secure funding for their projects.
3. **Consider the university and graduate program** of your potential advisors and whether it fits your needs. Audiology is an interdisciplinary field, encompassing facets of public health, linguistics, psychology, physiology, cognition, and perception. It requires a strong understanding of study design, methods, and statistics. It is recommended to also look at the interdisciplinary collaboration, training opportunities, and study design coursework of your potential PhD programs, especially with the variety of research aspects in audiology. Some psychology statisticians and researchers may have more in common with your chosen research area than audiology research faculty at the same university. Consider the study population for your area of interest and if the location of the university can provide that. If you are interested in studying one particular population (e.g., Deaf culture, cochlear implants in children), look for a PhD program at which you can easily recruit those participants.

What to Look For in an AuD/PhD Program

The information described above for AuD and PhD programs are also applicable for a dual AuD/PhD degree. There are three enrollment models of the AuD/PhD programs education:

1. The sequential model has students complete one degree and then move on to the other degree.

2. Simultaneous study involves applying and enrolling in each degree separately and completing coursework for both degrees at the same time, allowing for some overlap of coursework.
3. The dual-degree programs admit students through one application to one combined degree program that will allow them to [complete both degrees](#) while in graduate school.⁷

There can be some flexibility of enrollment models from PhD student to PhD student within the same graduate school. Ask your potential research advisors and the graduate programs directly about how they would like you to apply if you are interested in a dual degree.

What is Accreditation and Why is it Important?

Accreditation is the process by which an entity (in this case, a program/school) is meeting all formal requirements of academic excellence, curriculum, facilities, etc. There are two accrediting bodies associated with audiology programs, the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) and the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAЕ). The purpose of accreditation is to maintain educational and clinical standards across all programs.

Graduation from an accredited program is needed to obtain state licensure. When considering programs, it is [important to be aware](#) of accreditation status, the state of their accreditation and by which accreditation body, and when the accreditation is up for renewal.⁸

The Application Process

Note that the following is advice for the typical application process, be sure to research the specific requirements of each university you apply to.

Tip! Utilize your university writing center or visit [Purdue OWL Writing Lab](#)⁹ for assistance with brainstorming, formatting, spelling, and grammatical checks for personal statements and/or resumes.

Application Essays

Some programs will use the terms “personal statement,” “cover letter” or “letter of interest” for your application essay.

Most programs will ask for a personal statement. This should be a one-to-two-page document in which you talk about yourself, your clinical interests, the reason you want to be an audiologist, and why you are interested in a particular program. As such, it should be personalized for each graduate program. This is your chance to let the program know you as a person, so take your time to make this document clear, concise, and personal .

A cover letter usually includes information about how/why you are qualified for the position you are applying for and your specific interest in the organization. A letter of interest is very similar to a cover letter except that it is a snapshot of your interest in a position and a description of why you should be considered for an interview. Cover letters and letters of interest should accompany a resume and other required documentation.

It is important to have at least one person proofread your paper. If possible, have one person read it who is familiar with audiology or the application process and one person read it who is not familiar with audiology or the application process.

Letters of Recommendation

Graduate programs typically ask for two or three letters of recommendation from clinical or academic faculty. You can ask an audiologist or professor that you have observed or worked with for a letter of recommendation. You can also ask an employer for a letter, but it is advised to use your judgment if that person could write about your leadership skills or interpersonal qualities. It is not advised to have family or friends write a recommendation letter. Letters of recommendation are very important to the application board because it provides an outside perspective on your strengths and abilities.

When considering who you would like to ask to write your letters, think about a few factors: who can represent you and your academic skills in a positive light, who do you have a good relationship with, and who knows about your life goals. It is important that someone can speak about your academic potential. When asking, you can send an email to find out if they are willing to write a letter. However, if you ask in person, the

reference can put a name to the face, especially if you are in a large program. Most importantly, always ask if they will write you a *positive* letter of recommendation. If you ask in person, don't forget to send a follow-up email so they have the request in writing.

The next step is to prepare a packet about yourself for your reference(s). It should include a current resume, unofficial transcripts, a list of programs with contact information and deadlines, and stamped and pre-addressed envelopes (if needed). You may want to include your personal statement, or write a small paragraph about your clinical interests and/or specific program interests. Assemble the packet so the information is quick and easy to find in order to make this process as easy as possible for your letter writer. You should ask for letters of recommendations at least one to two months in advance to give your references time to write the recommendations. It is also appreciated when students write thank you notes to references.

GRE

The GRE, or the Graduate Record Examinations, is a standardized test for Graduate school entry (similar to the SAT). Many audiology programs require the GRE as part of

their general application requirements, though not all do so be sure to check your individual programs before sending scores.

The exam consists of writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning sections and takes about 4 hours to complete. The GRE costs \$200. You can send scores to four different schools for free at the time that you take the test, and it costs \$27 for every additional send.

It is generally recommended that students take the GRE during the summer or early fall before they apply to allow for adequate time to retake the GRE if needed. The GRE can be taken once every 21 days up to 5 times total. For more information and up to date costs about the GRE, you can visit [ETS' website](#).¹⁰

Interviews

Some admissions boards will ask potential candidates to interview. Be sure to investigate your programs of interest and find out whether or not this is the case. Prior to interviewing, take time to research the program and rehearse commonly asked questions in order to make your best first impression. The interviewers will already know about you because they have read your application packet. This is the interviewers' opportunity to observe how well you organize and articulate your thoughts. Take deep breaths, feel comfortable asking questions, and remember that being yourself is the best route to success. Make sure after you interview to send a follow up email thanking your interviewers for their time.

Sample Interview Questions: Below are a sample of commonly asked interview questions. A lot of information can be obtained by searching "graduate school interviews."

1. How did you become interested in audiology?
2. Why do you want to be accepted to this program?
3. What are you looking for in an audiology program?
4. Why should this school pick you over other candidates?
5. What area(s) of audiology do you plan to specialize in? (It's okay not to know.)
6. What three to five words would you use to describe yourself?
7. What are your strengths and weaknesses? How do you plan to overcome your weaknesses?
8. How do you handle interpersonal conflicts? What is an example of a time you disagreed with someone and how did you handle it?
9. How are you prepared for the rigor of graduate coursework?
10. Do you have any related work/volunteer experiences?
11. Where do you see the future of audiology?

Sample Questions to Ask: (for more examples, please see beginning of the document): During the interview, take the opportunity to ask questions about the program. Use this information to learn about the program and gauge if the program is a good fit for you.

1. What type of educational and clinical experiences will I get here?
2. What is the timeline and process for the final candidate decisions?

3. Tell me about your research opportunities with _____ faculty member(s).
4. Can I speak with current students about the program?
5. When do students begin clinical rotations?

Resume Writing

Sections to include:

- Contact information (header of every page)
- Education (include GPA if it will impress the application board; above a 3.4 is a good rule of thumb)
- Clinical experience (observational and/or practical)
- Work experience (i.e., job title, employer, timespan, achievements/responsibilities)
- Honors and awards

Optional sections:

- Professional memberships
- Continuing education (e.g., conferences, symposiums)
- Volunteer experiences
- Leadership experiences
- Languages
- Certifications

Formatting:

- One to two pages, no more than two pages
- Font size should be at least 11 and no larger than 12
- Choose an [accessible and easy to read font style](#) (e.g., Helvetica New, Arial, Calibri, Tahoma)¹¹
- Use space wisely (do not try to fit too much information on one page)
- Include two to three descriptions for *relevant* experience in a single line bullet
- Use present tense verbs for current jobs and past tense verbs for past jobs

Other Suggestions

- Prioritize the experiences listed on the resume to be audiology-related or reflect what you want to highlight about you as a candidate.
- Except for the contact information and education, other sections can be rearranged according to your experiences and what you want to showcase to the admission committee.
- Just like your application essay, have at least one person proofread your resume. If possible, ask for their impression of your resume to see if it matches what you want to highlight.
 - Some universities also have career centers where you can take your resume for review.
 - The Academy also provides a [resume review service](#)¹²

FAQs & Resources

The original questions and answers were taken from "Graduate School Night" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2020. It was attended by both undergraduate and graduate students. The session was an open discussion for undergraduate students to learn about the application process and ask for individual assistance on personal statements or resume writing. Other questions and answers were added by the SAA Member Relations Committee. Answers from multiple students are included below each answer. **The answers provided are methods that previous applicants have used are not expected to be applicable to every student and may not be successful with every single program.**

How can you tell if you are a good candidate for a graduate program? GRE® Scores? GPA?

- Contact your programs of interest and ask about what types of students they look for, what the best attributes for graduate students in the program are, etc.
- Professors are looking at your personal statement and other essay questions to assess what specifically about their program that you are interested in, and what qualities make you a good graduate student (e.g. time management, dedication).
- You can assess where your grades and test scores stand among accepted applicants to each program by looking at the statistics required on each program's website for accreditation. You can also find statistics on each program and accepted student statistics from the last cycle at [ASHA EdFind](#).¹³

When writing personal statements, did you write a brand-new essay for each program? Or have one or two paragraphs to rewrite?

- I rewrote a paragraph or two – watch for name changes before you submit!
- I used a template for structure and formatting to standardize what paragraphs were specific – you can find these online.
- I wrote a different statement for every program, depending on what aspects of my past and perspective I thought would apply to the program.
- Make sure to label and double-check all statements to ensure you are sending the proper statement to the appropriate school. Whatever you change should be something specific for the school you are applying to, such as the structure of the program, classes, or outside sites offered, etc.

What if my background isn't in communication sciences and disorders?

- Think about why you are drawn to audiology. Use your background to explain how it makes you a strong candidate and what you have to offer the field of audiology with your perspective.
- Use it to make you stand out instead of how to make yourself fit in.

Are letters of intent the same as a cover letter or personal statement?

- Essentially yes.
- Cover letters introduce you, explain your purpose for writing, highlight a few of your experiences and skills, and request an opportunity to meet personally with the potential employer.
- Personal statements are how you will introduce yourself to the university, which will reflect your personality, intellect, background, traits, and perspective.

Some programs ask you to write about research experiences or leadership experiences that were not available in my undergraduate program. How can I write about these "lack of experiences" in my personal statement?

- Use it as a strength about how excited you are to experience that in the graduate program, and/or what qualities about you or other experiences you have had will make you a good graduate student, clinician, or researcher.

How many programs did you apply for?

- This is a personal decision because there are a lot of factors to consider, such as size of the school, clinical experiences, GPA/GRE® scores, tuition, and funding. A good rule of thumb is to apply to at least one "reach" school of your dreams, one "accessible" school, and however many in the middle will make you feel comfortable.

How should I interpret CV vs. Resume?

- Resumes are meant to summarize your education and experience for graduate school applications or future employers. A curriculum vitae (CV) tends to be used for more scientific and teaching positions, so there is much more detail included in the descriptions. Typically, it is much longer than two pages.

Should I visit or tour the program before applying?

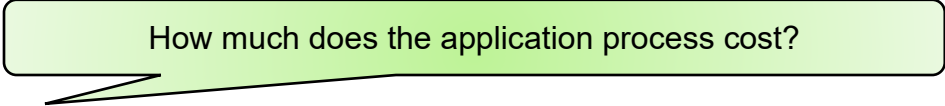
- The answer to this question is personal. If your funding allows for travel, then you can certainly visit the program and speak with faculty and students. However, you could wait until you receive your acceptance letters to visit the programs. If travel isn't an option, contact the program by email and ask to connect virtually to willing faculty and students to discuss the program.

Should I talk about my personal interests in interviews?

- It depends, if your personal interest is binge-watching television shows, then definitely not. However if your personal interest is related to audiology or healthcare, you will definitely want to talk about it. If your personal interest is something between these two examples, then decide how important it will be for your academic performance in graduate school. For example, you wouldn't write about being in a sorority unless you discuss leadership skills gained.

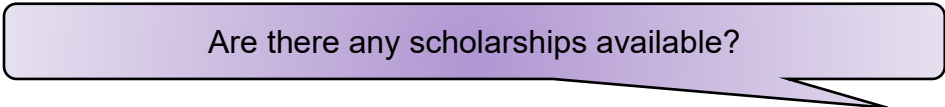
Should I talk about negative experiences, such as a low grade in a class or low GRE® score?

- In some cases, yes. If your academic record is weak due to personal issues such as a death in the family, medical issues, etc., it may be worthwhile to provide a thoughtful explanation. However, if you would prefer not to draw attention to it, then it would be best not to bring it up at all.

A green callout box with a black border and a tail pointing towards the top left. It contains the text "How much does the application process cost?".

How much does the application process cost?

- The cost of the applications vary by university and depending on how many programs you choose to apply to.
- As of 2021, CSDCAS charges \$137 for the first submitted application and \$55 for each additional application. The universities often have an additional graduate school application and cost. Transcripts, travel to interviews/visits, GRE® tests, and possibly more are all additional costs that need to be considered. Of note, CSDCAS offers [fee waivers](#) annually on a first-come, first-served basis or based on characteristics of your background/experience (e.g., McNair Scholar, low income, military service).¹⁴
- While this cost can be substantial, think of this as an investment in your future as an audiologist. It is helpful to narrow down the programs you are applying to and be sure to begin saving early. Look for other financial resources or scholarships that can help alleviate the application costs.

A purple callout box with a black border and a tail pointing towards the top right. It contains the text "Are there any scholarships available?".

Are there any scholarships available?

- Make sure to check with your individual programs for scholarship opportunities
- Make sure to fill out the [FAFSA](#) and check work study as many programs use work study for graduate and research assistant positions.¹⁵
- Here are some other resources to check out:
 - <https://saa.audiology.org/education-2/grants-and-scholarships/>
 - <https://www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarship-directory/academic-major/audiology>
 - <https://captioncall.com/professionals/education-training/scholarships>
 - <https://www.ashfoundation.org/apply/graduate-student-scholarship/>

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