

# **CAREER GUIDE FOR AUDIOLOGISTS**

SOC Code: 29-1121

Pay Band(s): 4 and 5 ([Salary Structure](#))

**Standard Occupational Description:** Assess and treat persons with hearing and related disorders. May fit hearing aids and provide auditory training. May perform research related to hearing problems.

**Audiologists' positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Rehabilitative Therapies Career Group](#):**

[Therapist II](#)  
[Therapy Manager I](#)

While Audiologists within the Commonwealth are all located within the Rehabilitative Therapies Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Health Care Compliance](#)  
[Program Administration](#)  
[General Administration](#)

## **SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS**

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

### **Skills**

**Note:** *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Audiologists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
2. Teaching others how to do something.
3. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
4. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
5. Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
6. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
7. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
8. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
9. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
10. Actively looking for ways to help people.

## **Knowledge**

**Note:** *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Audiologists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The **Knowledge** of:

1. Principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
2. Information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
3. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
4. Principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
5. Business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
6. Principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.

## **Abilities**

**Note:** *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Audiologists commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The **Ability** to:

1. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
4. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
5. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
6. Identify and understand the speech of another person.
7. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
8. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
9. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
10. Focus on a single source of sound in the presence of other distracting sounds.

## Tasks

**Note:** The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Audiologists. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Administer hearing or speech/language evaluations, tests, or examinations to patients to collect information on type and degree of impairment, using specialized instruments and electronic equipment.
2. Counsel and instruct clients in techniques to improve hearing or speech impairment, including sign language or lip-reading.
3. Evaluate hearing and speech/language disorders to determine diagnoses and courses of treatment.
4. Examine and clean patients' ear canals.
5. Fit and dispense assistive devices, such as hearing aids.
6. Maintain client records at all stages, including initial evaluation and discharge.
7. Monitor clients' progress and discharge them from treatment when goals have been attained.
8. Plan and conduct treatment programs for clients' hearing or speech problems, consulting with physicians, nurses, psychologists, and other health care personnel as necessary.
9. Recommend assistive devices according to clients' needs or nature of impairments.
10. Refer clients to additional medical or educational services if needed.

## INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The occupation of Audiologist is considered a **Social** occupation and frequently involves working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

This occupation is **Investigative** and frequently involve working with ideas, and require an extensive amount of thinking. These occupations can involve searching for facts and figuring out problems mentally.

The Audiologist occupation is a **Realistic** occupation and frequently involves work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often with real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery.

## **LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

It is nationally recognized that audiology is a health field career and is regulated to ensure competent delivery of health care services to citizens. Therefore professional standards and competencies including certification and licensure are expected.

Licensure is required for Audiologists positions in state government.

The Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology provides requirements for licensure and continuing competency for this occupation. Licensing information for Audiologists can be found on the Department of Health Professions web site at <http://www.dhp.state.virginia.us/>.

In addition to licensure, audiologists can acquire the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A) offered by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. To earn a CCC, a person must have a graduate degree and 375 hours of supervised clinical experience, complete a 36-week postgraduate clinical fellowship, and pass the Praxis Series examination in audiology, administered by the Educational Testing Service. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, as of 2007, audiologists will need to have a bachelor's degree and complete 75 hours of credit toward a doctoral degree in order to seek certification. As of 2012, audiologists will have to earn a doctoral degree in order to be certified.

Audiologists may also be certified through the American Board of Audiology. Applicants must earn a Master's or Doctoral degree in audiology from a regionally accredited college or university, achieve a passing score on a national examination in audiology, and demonstrate that they have completed a minimum of 2,000 hours of mentored professional practice in a two-year period with a qualified audiologist. Certificants must apply for renewal every three years. They must demonstrate that they have earned 45 hours of approved continuing education within the three-year period. Beginning in the year 2007, all applicants must earn a doctoral degree in audiology.

## **EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics provides the following:

Audiologists work with people who have hearing, balance, and related ear problems. They examine individuals of all ages and identify those with the symptoms of hearing loss and other auditory, balance, and related neural problems. They then assess the nature and extent of the problems and help the individuals manage them. Using audiometers, computers, and other testing devices, they measure the loudness at which a person begins to hear sounds, the ability to distinguish between sounds, and the impact of hearing loss or balance problems on an individual's daily life. Audiologists interpret these results and may coordinate them with medical, educational, and psychological information to make a diagnosis and determine a course of treatment.

Some audiologists specialize in work with the elderly, children, or hearing-impaired individuals who need special therapy programs. Others develop and implement ways to protect workers' ear from on-the-job injuries. They measure noise levels in workplaces and conduct hearing protection programs in factories, as well as in schools and communities.

Almost all states require that individuals have a master's degree in audiology or the equivalent; however, a clinical doctoral degree is expected to become the new standard. A passing score on a national examination on audiology offered through the Praxis Series of the Educational Testing Service is needed, as well. Other requirements are 300 to 375 hours of supervised clinical experience and 9 months of postgraduate professional clinical experience. An additional examination may be required in order to dispense hearing aids. States usually have continuing education requirements for licensure renewal.

Colleges and universities with educational programs for audiology offer graduate programs with some of these offering a Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree. Requirements for admission to programs in audiology include courses in English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and communication sciences. Graduate course work in audiology includes anatomy; physiology; physics; genetics; normal and abnormal communication development; auditory, balance, and neural systems assessment and treatment; diagnosis and treatment; pharmacology; and ethics.

Audiologists should be able to effectively communicate diagnostic test results, diagnoses, and proposed treatments in a manner easily understood by their clients. They must be able to approach problems objectively and provide support to clients and their families. Because a client's progress may be slow, patience, compassion, and good listening skills are necessary.

Employers require graduation from an approved program of Hearing Science and Language Development, culminating in a minimum of a Master's Degree. Also certification from the American Board of Audiology and the Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association are required along with a valid and state license in Audiology at the Clinical level.

In addition to graduating from an approved hearing science program, the Virginia Regulations Governing the Practice of Audiology requires continuing course work. The classroom or educational experience is directly related to the clinical practice of audiology and approved or provided by one of the following organizations:

- The Speech-Language Hearing Association of Virginia or similar state speech-language hearing association of another state;
- The American Academy of Audiology Association;
- The American Speech-Language Hearing Association;
- The Accreditation Council on Continuing Medical Education of the American Medical Association-Category I Continuing Medical Education;
- Local, state or federal government agencies;
- Colleges and universities;
- International Association of Continuing Education and Training;
- Health care organizations accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations; and
- A sponsor approved by the Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology.

The Virginia Area Health Education Centers Program lists the following Virginia educational institutions offering programs in audiology: James Madison University, Old Dominion University, and Radford University.

## **COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES**

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

### **The Commonwealth Competencies are:**

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: [http://jobs.state.va.us/cc\\_planningctr.htm](http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm). For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

## **COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH**

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Audiologist**

PAY BAND	PRACTITIONER ROLES
4	THERAPIST II

PAY BAND	MANAGEMENT ROLES
5	THERAPY MANAGER I

## Sample Career Path

### Therapist II

The Therapist II role provides a career track for audiologists who identify, assess, and manage auditory, balance, and other neural systems. The track is for those performing entry level to advance level responsibilities.

### Therapy Manager I

The Therapy Manager I role provides a career path for managers responsible for planning and directing speech and audiology diagnostic and therapy services. The Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology requires licensure of these employees.

## **ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:**

O\*NET (Occupational Information Network)

[http://online.onetcenter.org/gen\\_search\\_page](http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page)

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network <http://www.vacrn.net/>

Department of Health Professions

<http://www.dhp.state.virginia.us/>

### Professional Organizations

American Academy of Audiology

<http://www.audiology.org/>

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

<http://www.asha.org/>

Speech-Language-Hearing Association of Virginia  
<http://www.shav.org>