

Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants

1-1, 1515 Blanshard Street Victoria British Columbia V8W 3C8 Phone: 952-1502 Fax: 952-1222

BHADC #1

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Introduction

This pamphlet has been prepared by the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants of the Province of British Columbia to provide information on the requirements and steps to be followed by applicants for registration. In addition to this pamphlet, it is required that applicants become thoroughly familiar with the *Hearing Aid Act and Regulations*.

The applicant must go through the following steps to obtain registration:

1. Complete an Application Form, notarized on the 4th page;
2. Submit proof of 2 years post secondary education (transcripts and diploma) and two letters of reference;
3. Complete Conditions for Application for Licensing Form;
4. Pay the registration fee;
5. Pass an approved course in the dispensing of hearing aids;
6. Complete the training if required and submit "Schedule A";
7. Pass written and practical examinations.

CAUTION: Steps 1 to 4 must be completed before the application will be sent to the Examination Committee for approval. Once written approval has been received, the applicant may start training, **not before**. The training period cannot begin until the application is approved. The applicant has a maximum of 2 years to complete Step 5, 6 and 7. If they have not become registered by this time, the application expires. Only three attempts at the examinations are allowed per application.

The rest of this pamphlet describes each of these steps in detail.

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Step 1. Complete an Application Form

It is important that the application form be filled out completely. If information is missing, or the application is not signed, it may have to be returned and the process will be delayed. Make sure it is notarized on the back page by a lawyer, notary public or commissioner for taking oaths. If the applicant is unclear as to what is required in the form, the office of the Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants should be contacted at the following address or phone number:

Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants
 1-1, 1515 Blanshard Street
 Victoria, British Columbia
 V8W 3C8 Telephone (250) 952-1502

The application must be received and accepted by the Board before any training can be started.

Step 2. Submit proof of 2 years post-secondary education (transcripts and diploma) and 2 references

Please submit copies of college or university transcripts. If a program or course of studies has been completed that does not fit the standard 2 year post-secondary education from an accredited College or University, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the Board with a recognized "assessment of equivalency". The Grant McEwan Hearing Aid distance learning program is an accepted program and when completed meets the requirement for two years of post-secondary education. Please be advised that Grade 13 in Ontario is equivalent to Grade 12 in British Columbia and is **not** considered post-secondary education. If there are any other questions about what is considered to be post-secondary education, please call the Board office to clarify. You must also provide 2 references who are not family members or friends. They should be employers, educators or individuals who can attest to your character and ability. References must be submitted by the person giving the reference directly to the Board office.

Step 3. Complete and sign the Conditions for Application for Licensing Form

This form must be completed and signed by all applicants, no matter what an applicant's prior qualifications. **All** applicants, if practicing in B.C., must have on-site supervision by a licensed Hearing Aid Consultant until passing the Board examinations. The only exception is when exceptional circumstances exist and there is a need to provide services to clients in remote locations. When these exceptional circumstances exist an off-site supervision plan might be approved for an applicant providing the Board is satisfied that the applicant has sufficient, relevant and recent experience as a hearing aid dealer and consultant and meets the other qualifications for registration.

Step 4. Pay the Registration Fee

This **non-refundable fee** (currently \$300) **MUST** be enclosed with the application form. The cheque or money order should be made payable to the Minister of Finance. A receipt will be issued by the Board.

Step 5. Pass an Approved Course in the Dispensing of Hearing Aids

- a) The applicant must have passed an approved educational program before permission can be granted to take the examination. The home study course developed by the International Hearing Society (IHS) is an example of an approved educational program. The Grant MacEwan Hearing Aid distance learning program is an accepted program. An applicant who has not completed the prerequisite two years post-secondary education, but who is a student enrolled in the Grant MacEwan Hearing Aid distance learning program and has successfully completed the second trimester will be granted a trainee license (this is acceptance of registration as an applicant). The trainee license will remain valid only while the applicant remains enrolled in the Grant MacEwan program for a maximum of 24 months. Other courses, such as George Brown College in Ontario, will be considered by the Board, however it is the obligation of the applicant to provide details of any such course with the application.
- b) It should be noted that the Board considers the IHS course to be only an entry level course, and recommends further study in order to pass the Board examinations. Suggestions for more studies are provided in the sections under training and examinations. Details of the IHS course may be obtained from:

International Hearing Society
#4 - 16880 Middlebelt Road
Livonia, Michigan
U.S.A. 48154
Telephone (734) 522-7200

Step 6. Complete the Required Training and Submit Schedule "A"

Training must be provided through on-site supervision by a licensed Hearing Aid Dealer and Consultant. The Board will review the acceptability of each application and determine the amount of training required for each applicant. This will normally be 840 hours training (6 months) with a licensed Hearing Aid Dealer and Consultant, **to be completed within a nine-month period. Eligibility to take the written and practical examinations is granted when an applicant has completed the required educational and supervised training hours stated in the acceptance letter.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to find an individual willing to provide on-site training. A current list of the registered Consultants is available from the Board office. Please notify the Board when you plan to begin your training, otherwise it will be assumed to start upon the acceptance of your application. Please also notify the office if there are any interruptions to your training so that the Examination Committee can be made aware.

During the training period, the applicant should become proficient in each of the skill areas listed below. This should take place with the applicant first observing the supervisor and then being directly observed by the supervisor. As the applicant becomes more proficient in each of the areas, the supervisor should encourage the applicant to take over more of the decision process, gradually progressing from constant supervision, to close supervision, to general supervision. The policy reads, "(i) constant supervision; that is, direct full time observation by an applicant of the acts performed by a supervisor;(ii) close supervision; that is, direct full time observation by a supervisor of the acts performed by an applicant; and, (iii) general supervision; that is, on site review and consultation by a supervisor of the acts performed by an applicant."

It is recommended that the supervisor and applicant outline and document outset and mid-term training objectives as well as mid-term and final training progress. In addition, the supervisor will co-sign work performed by the applicant including but not limited to test results, clinical reports, case notes, and third-party forms. During the training period, the supervisor is responsible for actions of the applicant. Following the training, the applicant must submit a signed "Schedule A" which is contained in the application package.

Skill Areas

The applicant for registration must demonstrate knowledge and skill by passing written and practical examinations. To assist in preparation for the examinations, the following skill areas should be practised during the training period.

- (i) Masked and unmasked pure tone air conduction threshold determination.
 - Units of measurement: intensity (dB)
 - frequency (Hz)
 - Scales of measurement: (HL, SPL, SL)
 - Selection of appropriate test environments.
 - ANSI standard procedures for pure tone measurement.
 - Plateau (Hood) technique for masking. Other techniques will be reviewed by the Examination Committee.

(ii) Masked and unmasked pure tone bone conduction threshold determination.
As for air conduction scores except for the different rules of when to mask.

(iii) Masked and unmasked speech reception threshold determination.

The basics of speech acoustics. (Frequency, Amplitude)

Relationship of speech to pure tones.

Test materials.

Test procedures.

Masking for SRT measurements.

(iv) Masked and unmasked speech discrimination assessment.

Test material and procedures.

Expected scores with hearing loss.

Implications of testing to hearing aid fitting.

Appropriate masking.

Intelligibility weighting.

(v) Tolerance threshold determination.

Test materials and procedures.

Implications for hearing aid fitting.

(vi) Sound field comparison for aided and unaided performance in the procedures of speech reception threshold, speech discrimination ability, and tolerance threshold.

(vii) Real Ear Measurements (Functional Gain and Real Ear Probe Microphone)

(viii) Determination of the necessity for medical referral.

Basic anatomy and physiology of the outer, middle, and inner ear, and some knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the central auditory pathways.

Common causes and symptoms of conductive, sensori-neural, mixed, functional, and central hearing disorders.

To conduct an otoscopic examination sufficient to use the red flag system, as defined by the Board.

Red Flags

If the client has any of the RED FLAG signs, symptoms, or conditions, she/he must be referred to a physician. The Board considers referral for all conditions on the RED FLAG list as mandatory. It should be emphasized that there will be clients who do not fit into the RED FLAG categories, but nevertheless should receive medical attention. Consultants are expected to use their discretion in such cases.

Please be advised that failure to recognize red flags or situations in which medical

referral is required may result in immediate failure of the written or practical examinations. An applicant's knowledge of these conditions reflects their ability to practice safely. The following are the red flags you need to know.

List of RED FLAG Conditions:

Red Flags – Conditions requiring medical referral if there is no written or verbal clearance on record.

1. Patient under 16 years of age. (The Hearing Aid Regulations require that the child must have previously consulted an otolaryngologist and an audiologist, and that the dispenser has copies of each diagnosis prior to testing, fitting, or selling a hearing aid)
2. Rapid onset or fluctuating hearing loss.
3. History of active drainage in the preceding 90 days or visible drainage on examination.
4. Ongoing ear pain.
5. Unilateral or pulsatile tinnitus.
6. Acute or chronic dizziness.
7. Occluding cerumen or foreign object in the meatus.
8. Visible or unexplained, abnormality of the external ear.
9. Unilateral hearing loss greater than 30dB at any one frequency.
- 10 Air bone gap greater than 15dB at 500, 1k and 2k Hertz.
11. Difference of greater than 40% on word recognition test (minimum 25 word list, recorded presentation) between ears.

(ix) Accurate Ear Impressions:

Anatomy & physiology of the outer ear

Otoscopic examination sufficient to obtain an accurate ear impression

Materials and techniques for accurate ear impressions, including deep canal impressions

(x) Gain & Methods for Controlling it:

Hearing aid specifications

Electronic modifications to gain (eg. Volume control and AGC)

Acoustic modifications to gain (eg. Acoustic couplers, dampers, and tubing)

Modifications required to fit different losses

Gain required for binaural fittings

(xi) Saturation Sound Pressure Level and Methods of Controlling it:

Hearing aid specification related to SSPL

Electronic modifications to SSPL

Effect of different types of output limiting (eg. AGCi, AGCo, peak clipping)

Acoustical modifications

Modifications for fitting children

(xii) Confirmation Testing:

- Sound field measurements
- Probe-mic real-ear measurements
- Prescriptive selection of frequency response, gain, SSPL (eg. NAL, DSLi/o)

(xiii) Special Circuitry:

- Programmable & digital hearing aids
- Multi-channel/multi-memory
- Dynamic aspects of compression (eg. compression ratio, attack/release time)
- Directional/dual microphones

(xiv) Assistive Listening Devices:

- Types of devices (eg. Direct audio input, infra-red systems, loops, telephone devices, F.M., alerting/signalling devices)

- Benefits and limitations
- Interface to hearing aids

Additional information may be obtained through textbooks, courses, and consultation with or observation of other hearing professionals such as otolaryngologists and audiologists.

The following is a list of reading material which will be helpful to an applicant.

Key Texts:

Donaldson, Linda L., *Masking*, International Institute for Hearing Instrument Studies, 1999-2nd Ed.

Kramer, Elaine, *Distance Learning for Professionals in Hearing Health Sciences*, International Institute for Hearing Instrument Studies, 2000 Ed.

Sandlin, Robert E., *Hearing Instrument Sciences and Fitting Practices*, International Institute for Hearing Instrument Studies, 1996-2nd Ed.

Staab, Wayne J., *Applied Hearing Instrument Marketing*, International Institute for Hearing Instrument Studies, 1992 Ed.

Zelnick, Ernest, *Hearing Instrument Selection and Evaluation*, International Institute for Hearing Instrument Studies, 1987 Ed.

The above texts are available from the International Institute for Hearing Instruments Studies, 16880 Middlebelt Road, Suite #4, Livonia, Michigan, 48154, phone (734)522-7200

Supplementary Texts:

Martin & Clark, *Introduction to Audiology*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999-7th Ed.

Silman, Shlomo & Silverman, Carol A., *Auditory Diagnosis*, San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1991

Stach, Brad A., *Comprehensive Dictionary of Audiology, Illustrated*, Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins, 1997

In addition, recent journal articles in *Hearing Instruments* and the *Hearing Journal* as well as other journals relating to this field would be beneficial.

Step 7. Pass a Written Examination and a Practical Examination

- a) The written and practical examinations are held twice a year in the Province of British Columbia at a place, time, and location selected by the Examination Committee. Examinations are in the spring and the fall and are approximately 8 weeks apart. To find out the scheduled dates of the examinations, contact the Board office. Those candidates from out of province or in remote areas of British Columbia may take the written examination by proctor. The Board will arrange for a proctor upon request from the candidate.
- b) Applicants wishing to take a particular examination must notify the Board at least two months prior to the appropriate date.
- c) Applicants who cancel must notify the Board, in writing, at least one month prior to the scheduled examination. Those applicants who fail to give such notice, and do not appear at the examination for which they were scheduled, will be considered to have failed the examination unless proof of a valid reason for absence is given.
- d) The written examination is 2 ½ hours in length and consists of apx. 100 multiple choice questions. The practical examination is apx. 1 ½ hours in length and consists of 4 examination sections. The applicant must pass the written examination before they can take the practical examination. They must demonstrate knowledge of the procedures described in Section 4 of this pamphlet. The Board uses the International Licensing Examination (ILE) from the International Institute for Hearing Instruments Studies for its written examination. Candidates who are eligible to take the written examination will be sent, by the Board office, a “Candidate Manual and Study Guide” to prepare for the written examination. The fee to take the Board’s written and practical examinations is \$100.00 for each examination (\$200.00 for both examinations).
- d) Some applicants may be exempt from the practical examination because of their overall performance on the written examination and active experience in the field. Applicants who are eligible for exemption from the practical examination will be informed of this possibility in their acceptance letter.

**** Candidates who are taking the written and/or practical examinations must bring photo identification with them to the examinations. Candidates must also bring to the practical examination, a volunteer and the necessary material to take an ear impression.**

For the purpose of the examinations, the following symbols will be used and it is expected that the applicant will be familiar with them.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI S3.21) Methods for Manual Pure Tone Audiometry will be the expected procedures for the examinations.

The applicant will be notified in writing as to whether or not he/she passed the examinations. If the examinations are failed, the applicant may repeat them, but only three times. Re-application and Board approval is required for an applicant wishing to take the

examinations more than three times.

Summary

The applicant must go through the following steps, within a two-year period, to obtain registration:

1. Complete an Application Form, notarized on the 4th page;
2. Submit proof of 2 years post secondary education (transcripts and diploma), 2 references;
3. Complete Conditions for Application for Licensing Form;
4. Pay the registration fee;
5. Pass an approved course in the dispensing of hearing aids;
6. Complete the training if required and submit "Schedule A";
7. Pass written and practical examinations; and, to become licensed...

Acquire a Business Address, and a Calibrated Audiometer

Once the above process has been completed, the registrant has the option of obtaining an active or inactive license. If they choose an active license, before the license can be issued, they must supply the Board with a business address in British Columbia and a calibration report for the audiometer(s) they will use.

New licensees are not required to obtain continuing education credits in the year they become licensed. The preparation for the examination is considered to be the equivalent of continuing education for that first year.

Caution: Be advised you cannot practice as a Hearing Aid Consultant until passing the examinations and obtaining a license. Please refer to Section 5 and 6 of the *Hearing Aid Act*.

Authority for collection of the information requested in this application for registration package is found in the *Hearing Aid Act, Chapter 186* and the *Hearing Aid Regulations, B.C. Reg. 353/96*. If you have questions regarding the above, contact the Registrar, Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants, 5-1 1515 Blanshard Street, Victoria, B.C., V8W 3C8. Phone: (250)952-1502