

Audiologist and Speech-Language Pathologist



Job Description

Audiologists are professionals educated in the study of normal hearing processes and hearing loss. The audiologist determines if a person has a hearing loss, what type of loss it is, and how the person can make the best use of remaining hearing. If a person can benefit from using hearing aids or other assistive listening systems, the audiologist can assist with the selection, fitting, and purchase of the most appropriate aids and with training in their effective use.

Speech-language pathologists are professionals educated in the study of human communication, its development, and its disorders. By evaluating the speech, language, cognitive-communication, and swallowing skills of children and adults, the speech-language pathologist determines what communication or swallowing problems exist and the best way to treat them.



Employment Characteristics

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists may work in a wide range of settings, including schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, government health facilities, community clinics, geriatric facilities, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), public health departments, research laboratories, private practice, or industrial corporations.

The 2001 median salary for American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)-certified speech-language pathologists was \$45,000, for audiologists \$50,000, and for professionals who hold dual certification \$61,000. Those in supervisory positions can earn higher salaries, in addition to generous fringe benefits.



Employment Outlook

The outlook for job growth in this field is excellent, due to such factors as greater public awareness of speech, language, and hearing disorders, an aging population, and concern over occupationally induced hearing disorders. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment of speech-language pathologists and audiologists is expected to increase much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2006."



Educational Programs

A strong liberal arts focus is recommended on the undergraduate level. Typically, students obtain a degree in communication sciences and disorders. In both professions, graduate work is necessary for receiving credentials, including ASHA certification and most states' licenses. A doctoral degree is required for work in some areas. In 2012, ASHA will require a doctoral degree to award certification in audiology.



Inquiries

For information about a specific program, write to the director of the speech-language pathology and/or audiology program in care of the institution listed.

For additional information about the professions or program accreditation, contact:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
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