

There is plenty to think about as one nears the end of their 4th year placement. Have you thought about licensure and certification? The American Board of Audiology® (ABA) is dedicated to enhancing audiologic services to the public by promulgating universally recognized standards in professional practice. The ABA encourages audiologists to exceed these prescribed standards, thereby promoting a high level of professional development and ethical practice.

Q. What are advantages of having ABA certification?

Audiologists holding ABA certification have demonstrated that they exceed standards of licensure. Board Certified in Audiology® is the ONLY credential that exceeds criteria to obtain and maintain licensure in all fifty states. Furthermore, audiologists who obtain specialty certification, such as the ABA Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification (PASC®) and the Cochlear Implant Specialty Certification (CISC®) have proven through a rigorous application process and professional examination that they have attained a high level of knowledge in their specialty area. These credentials may be promoted widely as examples of an audiologist's dedication to the profession and to surpassing basic standards in audiology. These may be used to increase standing during employment application, to market and promote an audiology practice, and to set yourself apart from other audiologists who do not rise to the ABA's standards of professional achievement.

Q. How can I expect my career to advance by having ABA certification?

Holding the ABA Board Certified in Audiology® means that you have risen above basic credentialing standards in audiology. For this reason, many employers will recognize you as a valued addition to their organization. This may place you higher in a pool of applicants, put you in a better place for professional advancement, or even earn you bonus or higher pay as a result of holding ABA certification. If you choose to practice in a specialty area, such as Cochlear Implants or Pediatric Audiology, ABA specialty certification may even be required for you to be employed at certain facilities. Furthermore, the greater amount and higher level of continuing education that you will necessarily achieve in order to maintain your ABA certification may help to put you ahead of colleagues with emerging procedures and tools to continually improve your knowledge and skills throughout your career.

Q. How is ABA different from FAAA?

Simply put, ABA certification is earned through demonstrating your achievements in audiology and through continued professional advanced, whereas fellowship in the American Academy of Audiology (or any organization) denotes membership and is given freely as long as dues are paid. Membership in an organization is typically maintained because of what the organization offers. Certification is typically maintained because a professional wants to demonstrate what THEY

can offer to patients and employers. **Membership is a decision, certification is a commitment.**

Q. How does ABA certification compare to ASHA certification cost-wise?

Each organization sets the cost of its certification independently according to its own processes. As of 2014, Board Certified in Audiology® is \$435 every three years (\$300 for recent graduates). Specialty certification from the ABA – PASC or CISC – is \$330 every three years. There is a one-time \$100 application fee and exam-based certifications have a one-time examination fee. You can visit the ABA web site at www.boardofaudiology.org for current fees and application instructions.

ASHA at this time charges \$1,365 over the same 3-year period (certification without membership, paid annually). ASHA does not offer specialty certifications in audiology.

Q. What do I do if my future place of employment requires CCC-A only?

At one time, licensure did not exist and the CCC-A was the only credential that could demonstrate that an audiologist had met basic standards. Employers frequently required those standards for employing an audiologist. Once licensure was put in place in all fifty states, it became the standard (legally) to practice. However, many employers or human resources staff have not updated their employment requirements to reflect current standard to practice in audiology. You may contact ABA to obtain materials that will help you educate employers or potential employers about current standards for practicing in audiology.

Q. How do you suggest that 4th year students applying for jobs inform employer about their choice to obtain ABA certification after graduation?

Informing employers that you wish to pursue ABA certification after graduation tells them that you wish to achieve and maintain the highest standards of practice for yourself and for them. Providing employers with materials that demonstrate and compare the options available to you (no certification / other certifications / ABA certification) is a great way to show them what you are pursuing in your career and that you do not intend to stop learning when you graduate. You may obtain these materials by contacting ABA. Any employer can quickly and easily see the difference in what you want to achieve and will only be impressed by the fortitude you show by going beyond basic standards for practicing audiology.

Q. What is the difference between the requirements of ABA and ASHA certification?

At this time, application for general / ABA Board Certified in Audiology is dependent on similar requirements because entry into the profession is based on the requirements of licensure (doctoral degree, exam). However, Board Certified in Audiology® is the ONLY credential that requires maintenance through the attainment of a greater number of CEUs than required by any state. Maintenance of the CCC-A fails to meet requirements of many states.

In order to obtain the ABA PASC or CISC, candidates must pass a rigorous examination in the specialty area – currently the only examinations in audiology based entirely on standards of practicing audiologists. Maintaining specialty certification requires that you obtain a certain number of hours within that specialty area. More details may be found on the ABA web site at www.boardofaudiology.org.

Q. What do patients know about the ABA? How should I educate them?

Patient are increasingly aware of the high standards represented by ABA certifications. To be very honest, most members of the public never question or think about the organizations behind the certifications, but holding ABA certification shows the public that you have met high standards in audiology or in a specialty area of audiology. This means that they can trust you to be well-trained in your profession and take care of their audio-vestibular needs with the level of competency that should expect from their audiologist.

Q. Is it possible to have more than one ABA certification and when would this be useful?

Yes! Many audiologists maintain an ABA PASC or CISC AND an ABA Board Certified in Audiology. A few truly high-achieving audiologists maintain both the PASC and CISC. These individuals demonstrate a dedication to their profession and to their specialty areas that surpasses the level of achievement for either one alone.

Q. What do you think the timeline looks like before other specialty certifications will be offered through ABA?

ABA is constantly reviewing trends and assessing needs within the profession. There are many opportunities to create standards in specialty areas within the profession. Each must be analyzed to determine need, scope, number of projected candidates, and sustainability. Some specialty areas may be good candidates for a certification and some may be better suited for a certificate training program. You may visit the ABA web site or come speak with us during AudiologyNOW! to find more information about our current and upcoming offerings.

Q. What are the benefits of a new graduate becoming ABA certified?

New graduates are entering the audiology workplace for the first time. One of the most difficult things to do upon graduating is make yourself stand out. After all, you have been through the same training program as other new graduates and you have not yet created a body of work to comprise your curriculum vitae. In addition, many patients may see “young audiologist” before they see anything else. In order to stand out to potential employers and improve your recognition from patients, other members of the healthcare community, and peers, pursuing an ABA Board Certified in Audiology® credential demonstrates that you are not only serious about your profession, but that you want to hold yourself to higher

standards than are required by state licensure. This is the only credential which accurately represents this commitment to audiology.

In addition, the continuing education which you will need to complete while maintaining Board Certification will help you to broaden your professional training and keep up with current and emerging procedures in your profession.

Q. What is the best advice you have for students striving to become ABA certified?

If you are striving to become ABA certified, then you have already followed the best advice we could give you! As a student, you first need to complete your course of study and become licensed. Focusing on anything else is a disservice to you and to your training institution. Your training program has the responsibility of providing you with the education and experience necessary to prepare you for a career in audiology. ABA has the responsibility of giving you standards of practice that demonstrate your excellence in audiology.

Thank you for becoming certified through the American Board of Audiology!