



**BRITISH ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY EDUCATION,
ACCREDITATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

Guidance Document: Registration Options in Audiology

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Disclaimer:

Please note this document applies to the current context in Audiology and is subject to change. It is intended as guidance and will need regular revision to accommodate changes in education, accreditation and registration guidelines.

Sources:

This guidance document is based on the following article and conference presentation:

- **STEENKAMP, L., 2014. Registration Options in Audiology. *BAA Magazine*. Winter 2014, issue 29.**
- **STEENKAMP, L., 2014. Registration and Audiology. *Bournemouth: British Academy of Audiology (BAA) Conference. 21 November 2014***
- **STEENKAMP, L., 2015. Registration and Audiology. *DMU: British Academy of Audiology (BAA) Student Conference. 3 July 2015***

1. Introduction

Audiology in the United Kingdom is a profession with many titles. Over the years, we have had Registered Hearing Aid Dispensers, Clinical Scientists, Audiological Scientists, Hearing Therapists, Audiologists, Medical Technical Officers and Assistant or Associate Audiologists to name a few. Recently the term Healthcare Scientist, with specialisation in Audiology, was added because of Modernising Scientific Careers. The various titles and qualifications complicate professional registration because there are different routes to qualification, as well as different registration bodies to consider. At present, there are three different registration bodies in the United Kingdom:

- Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) (voluntary)
- Academy for Health Care Science (AHCS) (voluntary)
- Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) (statutory)

2. Link between Accreditation and Registration

The purpose of accreditation is to ensure that a programme of study meets essential criteria in the training and education of its graduates in particular fields. Registration refers to the licensing of the individual graduate to work as a professional. To be able to register to work as an audiologist in the UK, an individual graduate must successfully complete an accredited course and receive a recognised award, as well as demonstrate relevant competencies.

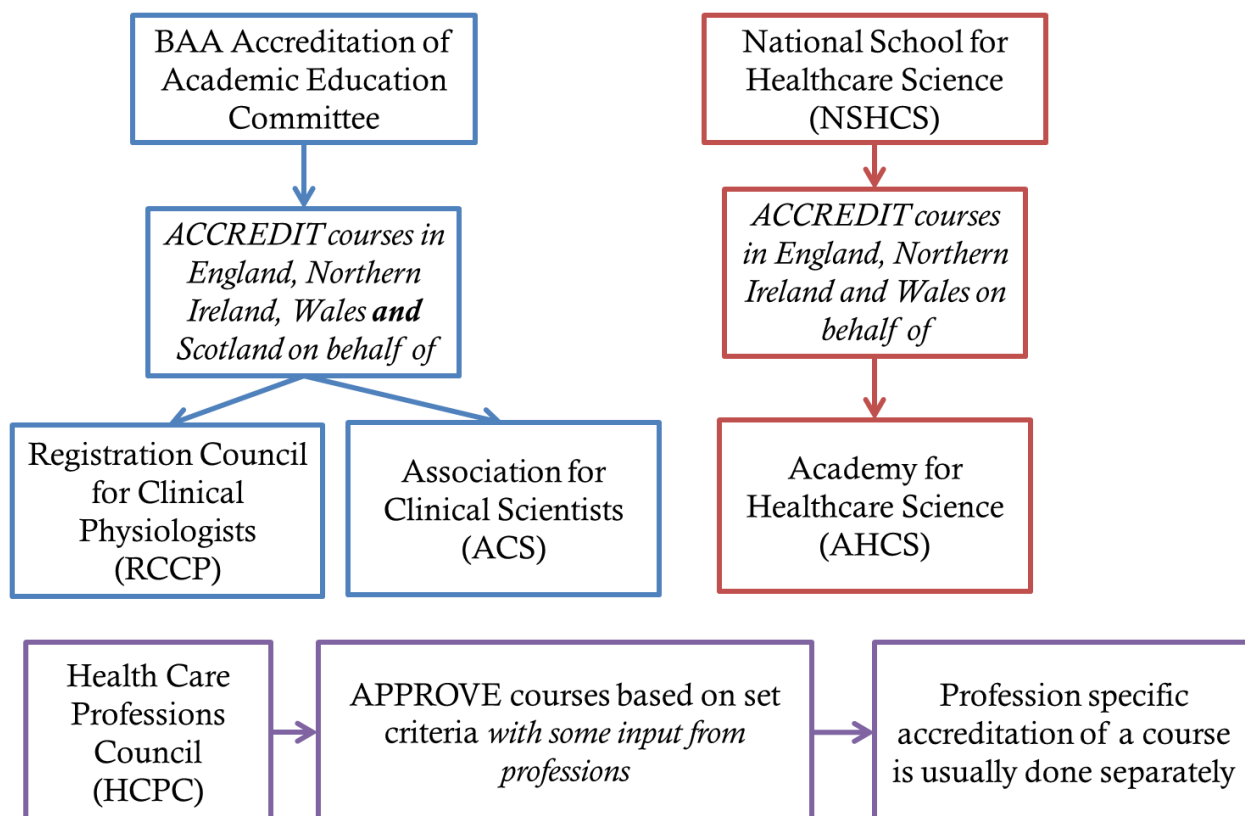
2.1 Accreditation and Registration Bodies in Audiology

There are 2 accreditation bodies and 3 registration bodies in the United Kingdom.

Accreditation Bodies	Registration Bodies
Registration Council of Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) <i>The BAA Accreditation of Academic Education Committee (BAA AAE) performs the accreditation on behalf of the RCCP, through the RCCP Professional Body Education Committee (RCCP PBEC).</i>	Registration Council of Clinical Physiologists (RCCP)
National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS)	Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS)
Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) (HCPC approves courses)	Health Care Professions Council (HCPC)

The BAA AAE committee accredit courses on behalf of the Association for Clinical Scientists (ACS).

The diagram on the next page provides more information on accreditation and registration bodies in the UK.



3. Why Register?

Registration provides evidence of qualification and the individual's ability to practice. It also indicates the boundaries of the profession (Scope of Practice). Registration provides a mechanism to monitor standards of care to ensure patient safety through:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Disciplinary Procedures

4. Which registration body should I register with?

This is not an easy question to answer. It is an individual choice that depends on the type of qualification, as well as the level of clinical experience and preferred work environment. Below is a list of questions to consider when determining a route to registration, but there is no one route that fits all. What is certain is that registration is important in protecting not only the patient/client but also the clinician.

1. Where did you qualify?

E.g. HEI (a Higher Education Institution) or through BAAT approved Schools of Audiology.

2. **Which award did you receive?**

E.g. BAAT, BSc, MSc (with or without Certificate of Clinical Competency (CCC)) or other.

3. **What is the accreditation and/or approval status of the programme you completed?**

E.g. RCCP (accreditation), HCPC (approval) or NSHCS (accreditation)

4. **What type of employment are you considering?**

E.g. NHS or Private, Clinical Scientist, Audiologist, Hearing Therapist or Hearing Aid Dispenser

5. Current awards in Audiology

The following Audiology awards exist in the United Kingdom.

1. Undergraduate Audiology courses in the United Kingdom

- Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology/ Foundation degree in Hearing Aid Audiology
- *BSc (Hons) in Audiology (no longer offered) / Graduate Diploma in Audiology (no longer offered)*
- BSc (Hons) in Healthcare Science (Audiology) **Practitioner Training Programme (PTP)**

2. Postgraduate Audiology courses in the United Kingdom

- Post Graduate Diploma (PgDip) / MSc Audiology course **with** Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) or equivalent
- MSc in Clinical Science (Neurosensory Sciences) **Scientist Training Programme (STP)**

3. Alternative routes to registration in Audiology

- *BAAT I and II (no longer offered)*
- PgDip / MSc Audiology course **without** CCC or equivalent
- Foundation degree / Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology *wishing to further qualify and register as an audiologist*
- International qualifications

6. Typical routes to registration in Audiology

The following section applies to courses that are accredited or approved by the three bodies mentioned in section 2.1. Please see the following websites to determine if the Higher Education Institution is listed before reading.

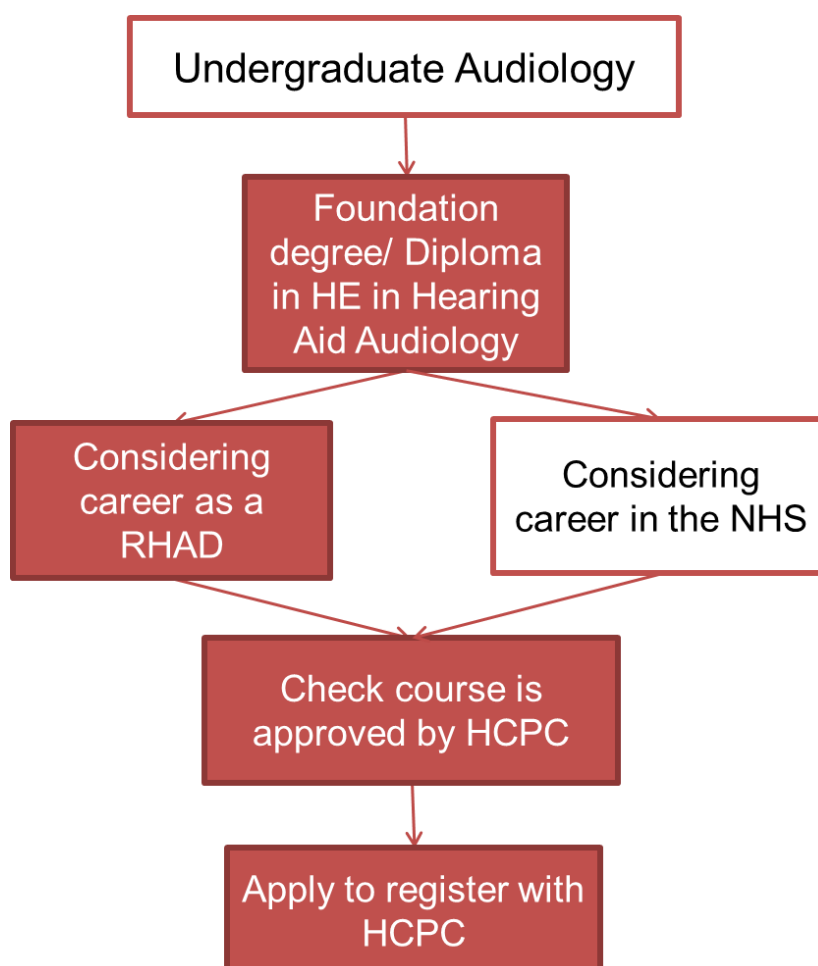
RCCP: <https://www.rccp.co.uk/articles/57/RCCP-Professional-Bodies-Education-Committee-PBEC>

NSHCS: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/ptp-join/nhs-practitioner-training-programme>
HCPC: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/> (select Education to search for approved courses).

6.1. Undergraduate courses

1. *Foundation degree in Hearing Aid Audiology / Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology*

Courses with these awards must all be approved by the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), and graduates are eligible to apply for registration as Hearing Aid Dispensers. Approved courses can be found on the HCPC website (<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/>). It is important to take note of the scope of practice of this protected title, as that may determine the graduate's employment options. Some graduates also work in the NHS with a similar scope of practice to that of the Hearing Aid Dispenser, without the sale of hearing aids. It is recommended that they do register, even if working in the NHS, but it should be acknowledged that they would not be practicing in the same capacity as a Hearing Aid Dispenser.

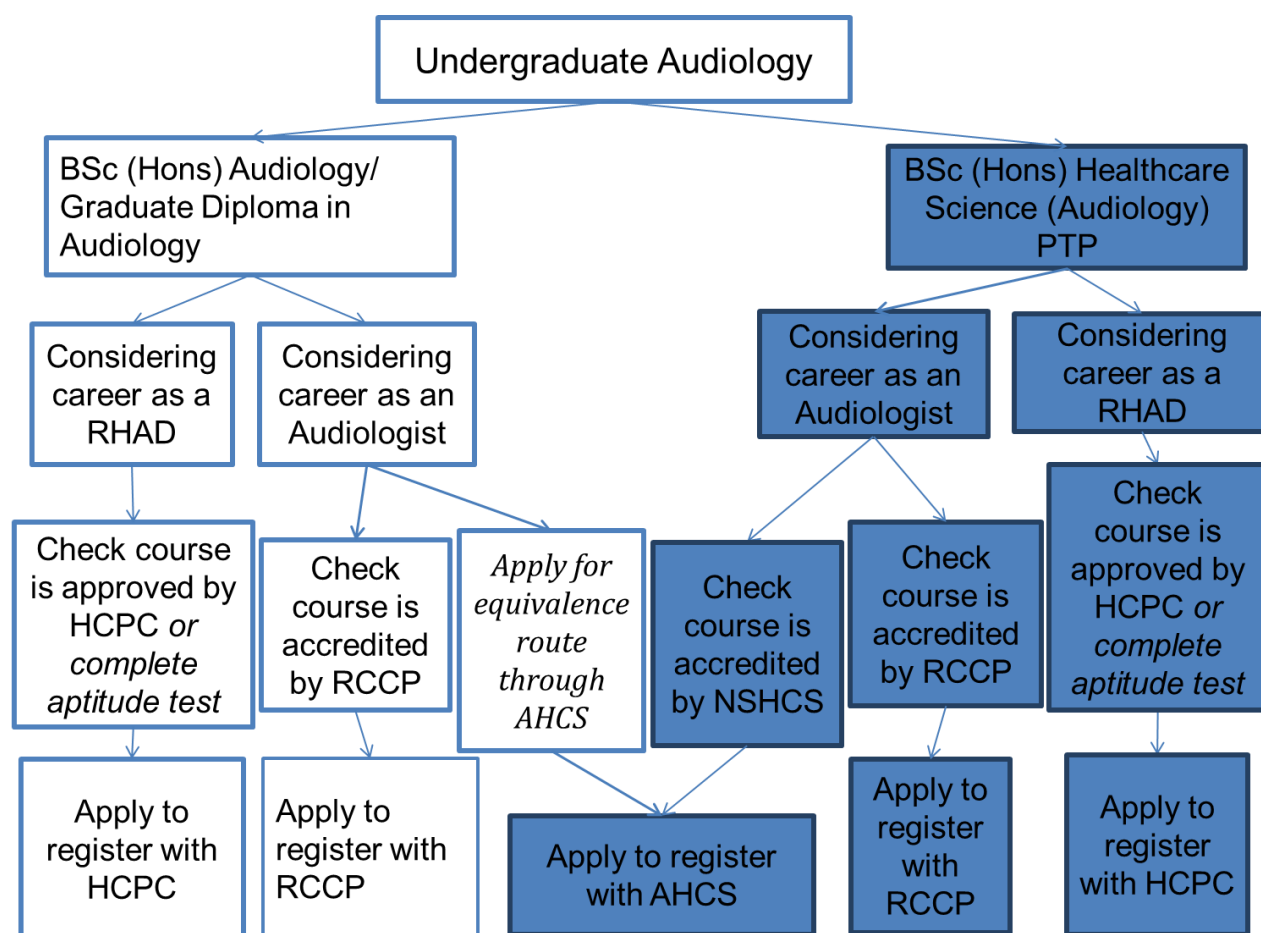


2. *BSc (Hons) in Audiology / Graduate Diploma in Audiology*

Graduates with these awards could register with the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) as an Audiologist and accredited courses can be found on the RCCP website (www.rccp.co.uk). Alternatively, they can consider applying for a certificate of equivalence (to PTP) with the Academy for Health Care Science (AHCS) to allow registration with the AHCS. See <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk/> for more information.

3. **BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology) Practitioner Training Programme (PTP)**

This course forms part of the Modernising Scientific Careers pathway for Healthcare Science. Graduates are eligible to register with the RCCP, but they can also apply to register with the Academy for Health Care Science (AHCS).

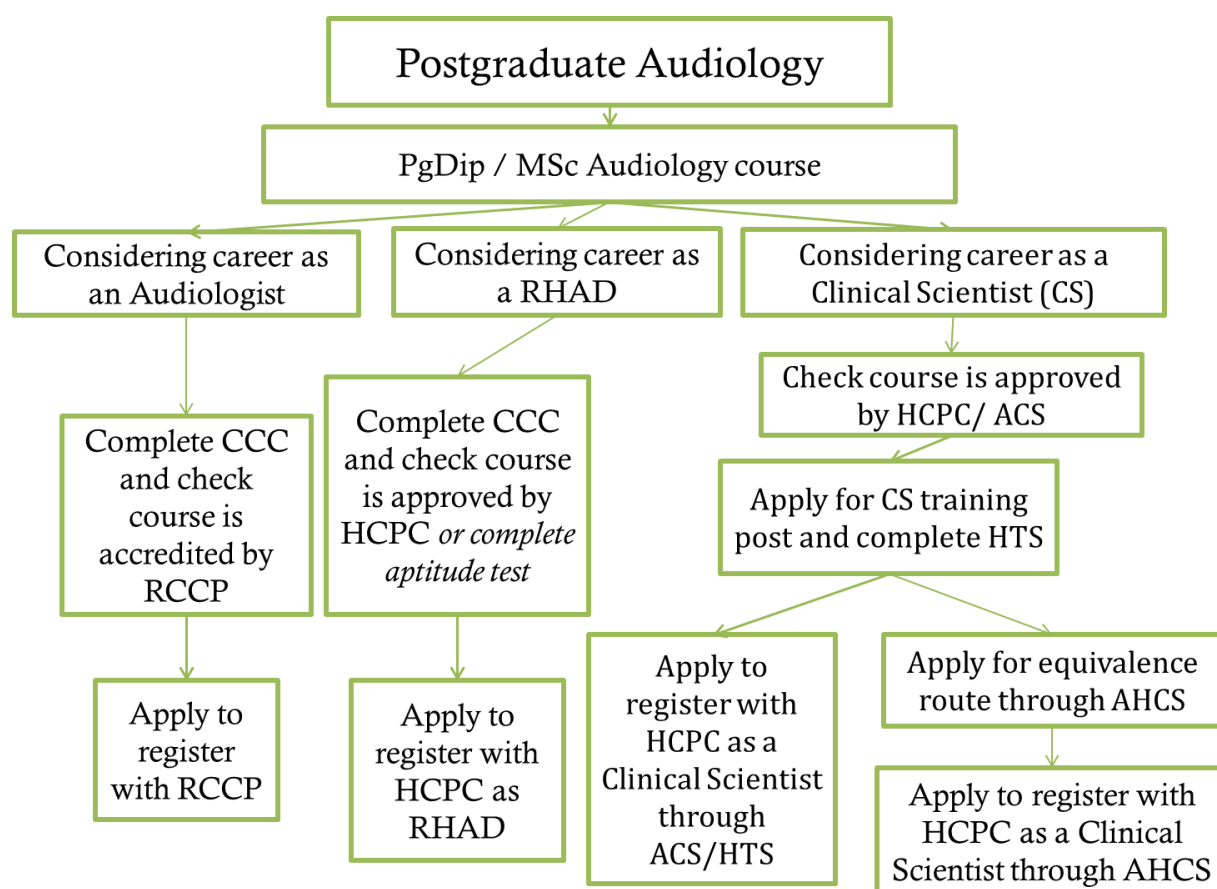


6.2. Post graduate courses

4. **PgDip / MSc in Audiology course with CCC or equivalent**

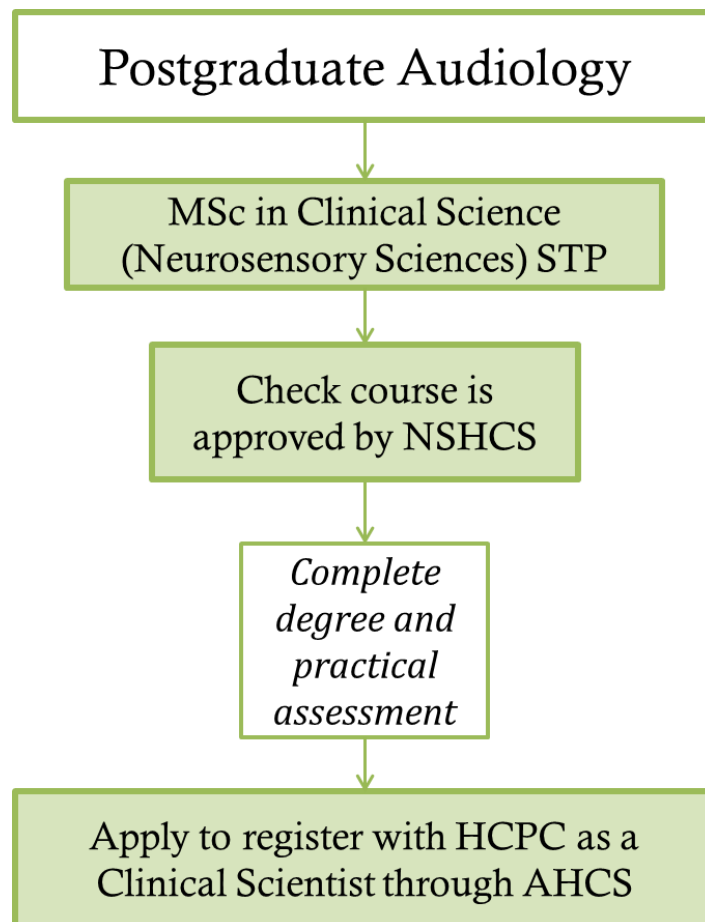
Graduates from this type of course can register with the RCCP as Audiologists, as they complete the Certificate of Clinical Competency (CCC). Alternatively, they may be able to consider the Clinical Scientist training route (via the Higher Training Scheme (HTS) *under review*). If successful they must register with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist, through the

Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS). This depends on the accreditation status of the programme.



5. MSc in Clinical Science (Neurosensory Sciences) Scientist Training Programme (STP)

This course forms part of the Modernising Scientific Careers pathway for Healthcare Science. Graduates are eligible to register with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist through the Integrated Assessment Unit (IAU (<https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/2013/11/25/the-clinical-scientist-integrated-assessment-unit/>)) of the AHCS, as per agreement with the Department of Health.



Some BSc (Hons) Audiology, BSc (Hons) Health Care Science (Audiology) and PgDip / MSc in Audiology (with CCC) courses are also approved by the HCPC for Hearing Aid Audiology and graduates are eligible for registration as a Hearing Aid Dispenser (see the HCPC website for a list of approved providers). This will depend on the applicants' work environment and scope of practice.

If a graduate is employed as an Audiologist in the NHS, it is recommended that they pursue registration with the RCCP or AHCS and not the HCPC as a Hearing Aid Dispenser. If they are working in the private sector then HCPC registration, as a Hearing Aid Dispenser, is mandatory. It is important to note the difference between an Audiologist and a Hearing Aid Dispenser.

Graduates are advised to consider an aptitude test (or similar), offered by some UK Universities (see the HCPC website for a list of approved providers), where a course is not approved by the HCPC for eligibility to register as a Hearing Aid Dispenser.

If RCCP registration is the preferred route, then it is important to apply through the Graduate route within 2 years of graduation. After 2 years, graduates will have to apply through the Standard route, which is more complicated than the Graduate route.

6.3. Alternative routes to registration in Audiology

A. BAAT

Clinicians who completed the BAAT I and II exams can apply to the RCCP to register as Audiologists. If a clinician is considering employment as a Hearing Aid Dispenser they are advised to sit an aptitude test, as the completion of this aptitude test provides eligibility to apply to the HCPC register as a Hearing Aid Dispenser. Alternatively, they can enrol on one of the Hearing Aid Audiology courses offered in England and Scotland. The clinician should contact the providers for further details of the requirements of each course. A list of approved providers is available on the HCPC website.

B. PgDip / MSc Audiology course without CCC or equivalent

It is possible to be awarded a PgDip / MSc in Audiology in England without completing the CCC, but this does not infer automatic eligibility to register with the RCCP as an Audiologist or with the HCPC as a Hearing Aid Dispenser or Clinical Scientist. To register with the RCCP the graduate will have to apply to the RCCP through the Equivalence entry route, or complete the CCC. Alternatively, they may be able to enrol on the BAA Higher Training Scheme (HTS) and register with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist, through the Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS) or the Integrated Assessment Unit (IAU)

C. *Foundation degree in Hearing Aid Audiology / Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology considering a career as an Audiologist*

Currently this qualification is listed on level 4 of the Healthcare Scientist (HCS) Career Framework and can be employed on A4C band 4 or 5 (adult audiologist) in the NHS. Audiologists typically enter the Career Framework from level 5 onwards because a bachelor degree is recognised to be at HCS Career Framework level 5. Audiologists can be employed on A4C band 4 or 5 depending on the requirements of the trust. ***It should be noted that the career framework does not necessarily represent Agenda for Change bandings used in the NHS.***

If a Hearing Aid Dispenser would like to develop their skills further and qualify as an Audiologist they can demonstrate equivalence, through a combination of clinical practice (completing the IRCP or equivalent) and Higher Education modules at an appropriate academic level. The scope of practice of a Hearing Aid Dispenser does not typically contain the assist or discretionary level competencies as outlined in the Individual Record of Clinical Practice (IRCP). The assist or discretionary level competencies involve Vestibular, Paediatric and Auditory Evoked Potential assessment and can include the following IRCP competencies:

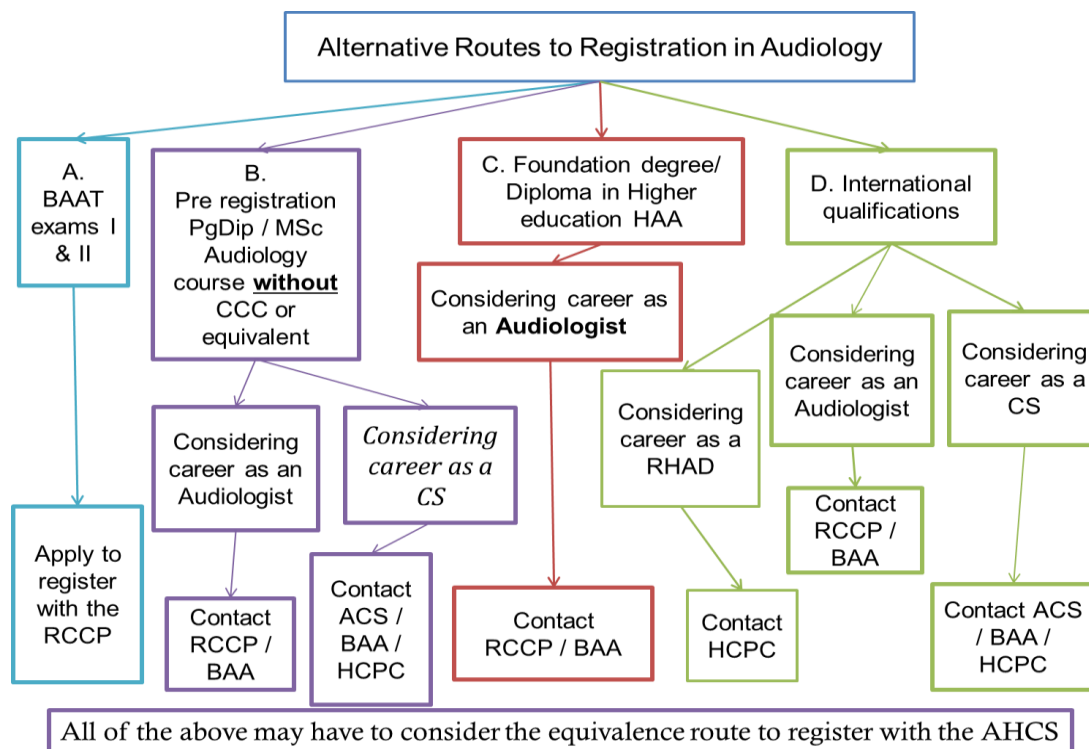
- A17 - Diagnostic and/or threshold auditory brainstem responses
- A18 - Eye movement assessment
- A19 - Bithermal caloric assessment
- A20 - Dix-Hallpike test
- A21 - Distraction test
- A22 - Performance testing / play audiometry

- A23 - Visual reinforcement audiometry
- A24 - Toy discrimination test (including automated tests)

Applicants should typically follow the equivalence entry route through the RCCP as applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. This may become a formalised RCCP accredited route through Higher Education Institutes in future.

D. International qualifications

Internationally qualified Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers, wishing to work in the UK, should contact the relevant registration body based on their qualifications and entry point. It should be noted that Clinical Scientist (CS) is a protected title and a post that is specific to the UK and it may require clinical training within the UK. The RCCP (<https://www.rccp.co.uk/articles/50/The-Process-of-Application-to-the-Register>) has experience considering equivalence with a range of international courses and the HCPC has a recognised route for international applicants.



6.4. Equivalence route through the RCCP

This route requires a minimum of 6 years training and experience in the UK, with evidence provided to indicate competent practice and underpinning knowledge, which is assessed by professional representatives. This route typically includes education and clinical practice. Applicants could demonstrate clinical equivalence by mapping their clinical experience to the IRCP logbook as discussed above. Applicants will need to provide a reference from their employer supporting their level of competence.

7. Advice for Employers and prospective applicants

It is clear from the sections above that registration is not only an issue for graduates and clinicians, but also for employers. Although registration for Audiologists is voluntary, the BAA and Department of Health recommends that all practitioners in Audiology be registered. Employers should therefore include this requirement in the job information packs for prospective applicants.

The decision of which registration body to join can only be made by the applicant. It is a decision that should be based on the philosophy and support offered to the registrant by the registration body, as well as the nature of their work environment and scope of practice. Clinical Scientists and Hearing Aid Dispensers **must** register with the HCPC as these are protected titles, with a recognised scope of practice.

8. Useful Abbreviations

RHAD – Registered Hearing Aid Dispenser

BAA – British Academy of Audiology

HAA – Hearing Aid Audiology

CCC – Certificate of Clinical Competency

RCCP – Registration Council of Clinical Physiologists

BAAT – British Association of Audiology Technicians

HCPC - Health and Care Professions Council

AHCS – Academy for Health Care Science

ACS – Association for Clinical Scientists

STP – Scientist Training Programme

PTP – Practitioner Training Programme

MSC – Modernising Scientific Careers

NSHCS – National School of Healthcare Science

9. Useful websites

RCCP – <http://www.rccp.co.uk>

AHCS - <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk>

NSCHS - <http://www.nshcs.org.uk>

HCPC – <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>

BAA – <http://www.baaudiology.org>