

REVIEW OF THE DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY (A.U.D.)

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: 51.0204
Audiology/Audiologist and Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist

OVERVIEW

The Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) program at Illinois State University is housed in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders within the College of Arts and Sciences. The department also offers a minor in communication sciences and disorders, a B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and a M.A., M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology.

This is the first review of the Doctor of Audiology program on the eight-year program review cycle. The program was authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education on August 23, 2005, and enrolled its first students in summer 2006. The program conferred its first doctorate in 2010. The Doctor of Audiology program was developed by the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders from the audiology sequence of its M.A., M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program in response to changes in audiologist credentialing nationwide.

The Doctor of Audiology program is designed to prepare audiologists to perform a wide array of diagnostic and intervention services associated with the practice of audiology. The Doctor of Audiology, considered a doctoral professional practice degree rather than a doctoral research degree, is now the entry-level degree required for employment in the field. The degree is required for students to receive the Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The degree is also a prerequisite for taking the qualifying examination required for licensure by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

The Doctor of Audiology program at Illinois State University is one of three doctoral professional practice audiology programs at Illinois public universities and one of five such programs at any college or university in the state.

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred, 2010-2017 Doctor of Audiology, Illinois State University

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Enrollment, fall census day	27	24	31	28	27	32	30	26
Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year*	7	5	4	8	7	5	9	7

* Summer, fall, and spring terms (e.g., graduating fiscal year 2017 consists of the following terms: summer 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

- The program provides students with comprehensive coursework in the discipline of audiology.
- The program provides students with clinical experiences that develop professional skills needed to work in all clinical settings with diverse clients.
- The program ensures that students understand the evidence-base for the profession and how to provide evidence-based practice.
- The program utilizes input from concerned stakeholders to ensure student engagement in the program and the high quality of experiences offered to students.
- The program prepares students to be employed as qualified and competent audiologists.

Student learning outcomes

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge that covers the breadth and depth of the field of study including ethics of the discipline and multicultural issues.
- Students will be able to write professionally.
- Students will develop and implement evaluation plans that are appropriate for individual clients.
- Students will create and implement treatment plans that are appropriate for individual clients.
- Students will be able to write clinical reports and treatment plans.
- Students will follow the ASHA and AAA Code of Ethics in all clinical experiences.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based practice.
- Students will apply evidence-based knowledge to assessment and interventions in clinic settings.
- Students will be critical consumers of literature in the field.
- Students will maintain an active voice in appropriate departmental discussions and decisions.
- Alumni will provide the department with feedback regarding satisfaction of education gained through experiences while a student in the program.
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Council for Academic Accreditation (CAA) will approve the program's annual CAA report.
- Students will be employed as audiologists after graduation from the program.
- Graduates of the program will indicate that they were well prepared for employment as clinical audiologists.
- Employers of CSD graduates will indicate that program graduates are competent clinical audiologists.

Program curriculum (2017-2018)

Graduation requirements: 106 credit hours consisting of 59 credit hours of academic work, 23 credit hours of clinical work, 6 credit hours over two semesters culminating in completion of an independent capstone project, and 18 clinical residency hours over three semesters. Because completion of the program is a requirement for Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology, all courses in the program are prescribed; there are no electives. Students typically enroll full-time in academic coursework or clinical practice for 11 consecutive semesters. During their fourth year in the program, students complete a full-time off-campus clinical residency.

Program delivery

The program is offered on the Normal campus.

The program is delivered primarily through a traditional face-to-face format; two courses are delivered in an asynchronous distance education format during the summer to allow students greater flexibility for off-campus placements.

Department faculty (Fall 2017)

10 tenure track faculty members (1 Professor, 3 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors)

8 clinical supervisors

5 part-time non-tenure track faculty members (1.5 FTE)

3 clinical administrators (i.e., Clinic Director/Director of Advisement, Director of Clinical Experiences for speech-language pathology, Director of Clinical Experiences for audiology)

Classroom instruction and clinical supervision for the department are provided by a team of highly-credentialed tenure track faculty members, clinical supervisors, and non-tenure track faculty members. Of these team members, four tenure track faculty members, five clinical supervisors, and two non-tenure track faculty members contribute directly to the Doctor of Audiology program. Their credentials are described below.

Each tenure track faculty member holds a Ph.D. in their field. Two tenure track faculty members hold both a Ph.D. and a clinical doctorate (Au.D.). All Au.D. faculty members are licensed and credentialed in their field. Tenure track faculty members are responsible for all classroom teaching in the Doctor of Audiology program. They contribute to scholarship in their specializations through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals (including the flagship journal in the field) and through conference presentations. Tenure line faculty members also participate in service activities at the department, college, university, and professional levels. Several faculty members serve on

journal editorial boards, and some have served on state or national professional associations such as the American Board of Audiology, the American Academy of Audiology, and the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Each clinical supervisor holds a Doctor of Audiology degree and is certified and licensed. Some clinical supervisors also teach Au.D. courses. Non-tenure track faculty members hired to teach audiology must have at least a clinical doctorate (Au.D.). As the number of tenure track faculty members in the department has increased in recent years, fewer non-tenure track faculty members have been needed.

Specialized accreditation

The Doctor of Audiology program is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The program was re-accredited on October 1, 2013 for eight years, through September 30, 2021. The next full accreditation review is scheduled for August 2020. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders submits annual reports to CAA. Based on its review of the annual reports, the accreditor has determined the Doctor of Audiology program to be in compliance each year. The American Academy of Audiology also accredits audiology programs; however, because that accreditation is not recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and because department funds available to pay accreditation fees are limited, the department has chosen not to pursue that second accreditation.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

Although the scope of practice for audiologists has expanded over the years, there have not been significant changes in the fundamental purpose or nature of the academic discipline or field since the last program review. Societal need for audiologists continues to grow. To address that need, the number of jobs for audiologists is expected to increase in Illinois and nationally at rates higher than the average across all occupations. Colleges and universities are challenged with preparing more audiologists to meet the current shortage and to fill additional positions. Given these dynamics, Illinois State University has experienced a strong demand from prospective students for its audiology program. That demand is expected to continue throughout the next program review cycle. Increasingly, technology is being used to supplement face-to-face instruction in the discipline. The audiology program at Illinois State uses technology, such as the online learning management system at the University, to supplement face-to-face instruction with podcasts and online discussions and to deliver two online courses. Audiology faculty members have also investigated use of simulated clients to teach fundamental clinical knowledge and skills.

Response to previous program review recommendations

Because this is the first program review for the Doctor of Audiology program on the eight-year program review cycle, there were no previous program review recommendations for faculty to address. There were, however, issues identified through compilation of the three-year progress report submitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 2010. These included development and implementation of a student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program, efforts to recruit additional faculty expertise, continued refinement of the student recruitment process, and continued efforts to secure additional funds for graduate assistantships. Audiology faculty has successfully addressed all four issues.

Major findings

Established in 2006, the Doctor of Audiology program continues to develop as students graduate and as faculty members make changes to the curriculum based on experiences of those students. The program has also stabilized with respect to the numbers of classroom faculty members and clinical faculty members. As the program has matured and built a national reputation, the demand from prospective students for admission to the program has increased, from 33 applicants in 2010 to at least double that number every year since. In addition, the program has attracted more highly-credentialed students as evidenced by a higher average undergraduate grade point average for entering students. The curriculum continues to be effective in preparing students for work in the field. In 2016, for example, all external supervisors of fourth-year residency students rated their students as sufficiently knowledgeable, able and willing to work independently and cooperatively, and exhibiting highly professional behavior. The strength of the curriculum continues to be strong clinical training in foundational and general

audiological skills as well as training in tinnitus, auditory processing disorders, hearing conservation, and vestibular evaluations. Aspects of the program identified through the review process as opportunities for improvement include a student-to-faculty ratio higher than ratios for comparator programs, aging facilities, and a two-year decline in the number of applicants accepting their admission offer. Numerous applicants have identified lower financial support compared to support offered by other institutions as a primary reason for enrolling elsewhere. Facilities used by the program, including classrooms, research laboratories, and the Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic, are not ideal educational or clinical environments for students, faculty, staff, or the general public. There is insufficient space to accommodate the research facilities that would be needed if additional faculty members were hired. In addition, there is insufficient space to offer cochlear implant programming and evoked potential/auditory brainstem response and vestibular testing.

Initiatives and plans

- Continue advocating for improved facilities for all communication sciences and disorders programs. The department will continue exploring construction of an allied health building that would house clinical facilities of the department as well as academic or clinical facilities of other health-related programs at the University.
- Investigate possibilities for diversifying clinical experiences offered by the program. Faculty will work with health care facilities and personnel to explore establishing partnerships that provide audiology students unique clinical experiences. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders will also expand marketing of its Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic with a goal of expanding the diversity of clinical challenges experienced by audiology students.
- Assess the new curriculum and make changes as needed, using student learning outcomes assessment findings to inform program assessment.
- Continue collaborating with Milner Library faculty in providing access to research resources and services needed to support student learning and faculty research and in further integrating information literacy instruction with the curriculum.
- Increase the number of students who accept their offer of admission to the program. One strategy for achieving this goal is continuing to pursue options for reducing the cost to complete the program. Reduction in the number of credit hours associated with the fourth-year residency, approved in 2017, is one such strategy that has been implemented. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders also intends to continue submitting annual requests to the College of Arts and Sciences for increased financial support for students enrolling in the program. In addition to focusing on costs of attendance, faculty will review graduate admissions policies to ensure that admission is offered to the most appropriate applicants
- Establish a sustainable international/humanitarian outreach experience for students in the program, working with the Office of International Studies and Programs at the University.
- Establish an interprofessional educational experience (IPE) for students in the program. Faculty members intend to work with faculty of the School of Social Work at the University to explore establishment of an IPE that bridges audiology and social work.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome. The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) program to be in Good Standing.

The committee recognizes that this is the first review of the Doctor of Audiology program on the eight-year program review cycle. The committee thanks the program for a comprehensive and concise self-study report that is critical and forward looking. A particularly noteworthy aspect of the report is the analysis of comparator and aspirational programs and their relevance to the program at Illinois State University. The discussion of facilities in that analysis was informed by program faculty visits to other institutions.

The committee congratulates program faculty for reaccreditation of the Doctor of Audiology program in 2013 for eight years by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech Language Hearing Association. This is a critical achievement because only by completing an accredited program can students qualify for the Certificate of Clinical Competence required to practice as an audiologist. Demand for the Au.D. program at Illinois State remains strong, as more than 60 applicants vie for 8 to

10 program openings each year. Faculty has added an interview to the admissions process to help select the most qualified and talented students from the applicants. Credentials of incoming students with respect to grade point average have improved in recent years, and the job placement rate for program graduates has reached a three-year average of approximately 90 percent. The program annually graduated six students on average from 2010 through 2016, thus helping address the shortage of audiologists in the state and nation.

The committee recognizes faculty for its ongoing efforts to develop and maintain a curriculum that is rigorous, current with the discipline and profession, and in alignment with accreditation standards. Through the most recent curriculum revision, finalized in fall 2017, faculty has reduced the number of credit hours required for graduation by 20, through a combination of course deletions, consolidation of course content, and changes in the policy governing student registration for clinical courses. The reduction will benefit students by reducing the cost of the degree. To four courses in the program, faculty has added activities or projects through which students learn about providing audiology services to diverse populations to better prepare students for the changing demographics of the state and nation. Faculty members focus on clinically-oriented research and involve audiology students in that research, including publication and presentation of research findings. In 2016, for example, 11 faculty publications or presentations involved graduate students as co-authors or co-presenters. The committee recognizes the program for its support of other out-of-classroom learning opportunities, including sponsorship of two registered student organizations associated with the audiology profession: chapters of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association and the Student Academy of Audiology. The organizations are involved in numerous professional development and community service initiatives, such as the Special Olympics Healthy Hearing program and community health fairs. Currently under discussion is establishment of a humanitarian outreach experience for audiology students through the Student Academy of Audiology chapter.

The committee commends the program for the quality clinical experiences available to audiology students through the Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic administered by the department and through clinical experiences arranged for students at off-campus locations. The clinic involves students in supervised provision of testing and treatment services to members of the campus community and to area residents. The department has worked to update technologies used to provide those services to best prepare students and to best serve clients. The self-study report articulates concerns regarding the adequacy of clinic facilities. The committee commends the department for maximizing use of its facilities while seeking alternatives to better serve its clientele. Particularly noteworthy is the arrangement with Normal Township to offer a satellite audiology clinic at its Activity and Recreation Center (ARC) northeast of campus.

The committee recognizes faculty for its continued use of assessment findings to inform and guide program revisions and enhancements. Faculty members periodically revise the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program, most recently to align Knowledge and Skills Acquisition (KASA) standards with the curriculum. A related feedback mechanism used by the program and department is the Student Advisory Board, which consists of students in the audiology program and other academic programs of the department elected by their peers. The board provides a venue for regular communication involving the department chairperson and students regarding academic programs, policies, student support services, and department initiatives.

Recommendations. The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2025, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue exploring options for upgrading department facilities. A long-term solution to the facility challenges facing the department and its clinic may be relocation of either or both to a newly constructed facility on campus. However, given anticipated levels of state support for capital improvements at its public universities and the substantial backlog of capital improvement projects awaiting funding, such a new facility is not likely to be built within the next decade. Accordingly, the committee recommends that the department continue to work with the College of Arts and Sciences to explore other means of upgrading department facilities. Warranting particular attention is the need for the additional laboratory research facilities for department faculty. The department might explore establishing partnerships with health care or social service institutions in the community to provide off-campus clinical sites that could supplement or replace existing facilities in Fairchild Hall and Rachel Cooper. The satellite audiology clinic at the Normal Township Activity and Recreation Center (ARC) might be one model for

off-campus facilities. Other options to consider include working with the college to explore reconfiguration of space in Fairchild Hall and Rachel Cooper or access to it, use of other space on campus, or leasing space near campus. For guidance in exploring ways to upgrade facilities, faculty might also look to aspirational programs that operate clinics through health care facilities either on or near their campus.

Continue the dialogue about increasing graduate assistantships and fellowships. The ability to provide graduate assistantships or tuition waivers to more than six students each year would make it possible for the program to enroll more top choice students. In addition to encouraging continued dialogue with the college and university administration regarding centrally-funded graduate assistantship lines, the committee recommends that the program explore ways to engage individual donors or external entities as sponsors of graduate fellowships. Experiences of aspirational programs might help inform this exploration.

Explore ways to increase licensure examination pass rates and employment rates. According to data presented in the self-study report, licensure examination pass rates and employment rates for graduates of the Doctor of Audiology program at Illinois State, while averaging 82 percent and 89 percent, respectively, over the last three years, are lower than rates reported by comparator Illinois universities. Given the small number of graduates of the program each year, a single student not passing the examination or obtaining a job in a timely manner might explain the differences. They might also be due to underreporting by program graduates. Nevertheless, the committee recommends that faculty investigate reasons for the lower rates in the program and explore ways to increase them to levels nearer to those of comparator programs.

Evaluate curriculum changes. With regard to the program curriculum, the committee agrees with faculty that changes made to the curriculum in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 to reduce the number of required credit hours warrant evaluation for their impact on student learning, matriculation, and licensure. The committee also concurs with the faculty goal of establishing an inter-professional education experience, perhaps with the School of Social Work, particularly since such experiences are now required by the program accrediting association.

Continue working toward permanent funding for clinical supervisors. An aspect of the program cited by the self-study report as distinguishing the program from its Illinois comparators is its emphasis on clinical experiences, including preparation of students for those experiences and mentoring of students while completing them. The quality of student performance in their clinical assignments is reflected in positive feedback received by the program from its clinical supervisors, especially supervisors not otherwise affiliated with the University. To preserve this distinctive aspect of the program, the committee encourages faculty to continue working with the College of Arts and Sciences toward permanent funding for all audiology clinical supervisors in the department.

Develop and implement a plan for furthering student and faculty diversity. The committee acknowledges the challenges faced by the department in achieving greater gender and racial/ethnic balance in the Doctor of Audiology program, particularly in its student population. However, it may be difficult for the department to achieve greater diversity without having goals and a plan for working toward those goals. Accordingly, the committee encourages the department to establish goals for gender and racial/ethnic diversity among its students and among its faculty members, particularly non-tenure track faculty members and clinical supervisors. The committee further encourages the department to formalize and implement a plan for working toward those goals. The committee recommends that the plan focus not just on outreach and recruitment activities but also include attention to furthering a climate of inclusiveness. The committee commends efforts already made by faculty in that regard, such as incorporating diversity content in courses and increasing gender and racial/ethnic diversity among its tenure-line faculty.

Develop and implement a plan for engaging alumni. The self-study report identifies expansion of efforts to engage program alumni as a goal for the next program review cycle. The committee concurs. Engaged alumni could benefit the program by mentoring students, helping students with practicum and job placements, providing input regarding the program curriculum, or contributing financially to student scholarships or fellowships. The committee recommends that the department formalize and implement a plan for engaging its alumni. Some elements of such a plan are already in place, such as the university-wide alumni survey and exit surveys administered by department programs. Other strategies that might be considered include developing an alumni database and systematic use of social media.

Implement the plan for expanding collaboration with Milner Library. The self-study report identifies as a goal for the next program review cycle expanding collaboration with Milner Library and its communication sciences and disorders subject specialist to facilitate appropriate use of library resources. The self-study report sets forth a plan for doing so, including identifying appropriate points in the Doctor of Audiology program curriculum for information fluency instruction. The committee commends the department and library for their collaboration in developing the plan and encourages implementation of it.

Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan. The committee encourages faculty to continue its implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize data collected through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done.