



Articulating the specialism

The role of the Educational Audiologist

The link between a child or young person's clinical and real-world experiences

Background

An Educational Audiologist in the United Kingdom (UK) may be an experienced Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (QToD) or a qualified clinical audiologist, who also has a master's degree or postgraduate (PGDip) diploma in Educational Audiology.

The role of the Educational Audiologist is unique. They utilise their audiological skills and knowledge to explore the daily experience of the deaf baby, child, or young person. They can provide crucial information to clinical departments on the real-world impact of listening devices through verification and validation assessments. The role demands knowledge, efficiency and flexibility in a field that continues to evolve in terms of rapidly changing technology, increasing sophistication of testing techniques, new government initiatives, ever-increasing connectivity options, and the demand for improved outcomes.

Educational Audiologists have an enhanced level of understanding of the audiological development of the deaf child and how this affects their communicative, linguistic, social, and cognitive development throughout their life. Their understanding of hearing levels and relevant technology is combined with knowledge of speech acoustics and environmental acoustics to analyse the child's experience of sound – especially speech – and to suggest interventions to maximise access.

Educational Audiologists and QToDs are critical partners in the team linked to a deaf baby, child, and young person. Working in a child-centred way, they promote communication access which is essential for participation and learning in family, social, and classroom environments. They have skills, knowledge, and experience of working routinely across the age range, currently from birth to adulthood (ranging between 18 and 25 years), as per each UK nation's code of practice.

Core teaching role

In the UK, most Educational Audiologists have previously trained as QToDs, and direct teaching continues to form a significant proportion of the role. This teaching may be in the form of direct rehabilitation support for the child, developing listening skills through a new form of auditory stimulation, auditory training type activities, and using listening for the development of speech and language skills. It also includes teaching children and young people about their deafness, helping them to explore their deaf identity, and ensuring they are able to advocate for their needs in school and society, and as they begin their adult lives.

Teaching also forms part of the training and support role for local professionals to ensure appropriate expectations are shared and strategies to support the child are deployed. Support is given to ensure that non-specialist staff understand the implication of deafness for the individual baby, child, and young person, and feel confident in the appropriate use of technology.

Additional role in the health sector

Additional clinical training enables the Educational Audiologist to be an active participant in audiology clinics and in some cases to take earmoulds. Where Educational Audiologists work as part of the multi-disciplinary team in joint health and education audiology clinics, this provides a family-centred service, integrating both clinical and educational advice.



This close liaison also enables Educational Audiologists to strategically influence the provision of new hearing devices, working together to consider the implications of clinical decisions in the context of the wireless remote microphone technology, which the local authority (LA) will be able to deploy.

Registration

Educational Audiologists are able to voluntarily register with the UK's Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP), a subsidiary of the Academy for Health Care Science (AHCS), which enforces high standards of practice and maintains a public database of registrants for six disciplines. Professional registration improves joined-up working between health and education services and promotes public recognition of the need for these links.

Reasonable adjustments

Educational Audiologists have knowledge and experience with regard to providing specialist advice for reasonable adjustments in terms of acoustics and audiological equipment via Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and Access to Work (AtW) applications.

This specialist advice is invaluable for deaf young adults, their families, teachers, tutors, lecturers, and employers in further and higher education, apprenticeships, and other career paths.

Multi-disciplinary role

The duties of the Educational Audiologist can vary due to the existing structure and specialisms within a team, the joint commissioning arrangements between the LA education and health services, and other localised factors. For some Educational Audiologists, their role may include

- Participating in multi-professional meetings at local, regional, and national levels, focusing on hearing screening/assessments, assistive listening technology, and accessibility
- Supporting joint clinics and possibly being present at the confirmation of deafness, providing families with information on available support and services
- Leading school-based hearing assessments upon request in regions without school entry hearing screening
- Leading clinics specific to wireless remote microphone technology
- Co-ordinating with health and education services, device providers, and professional associations to ensure effective, value-for-money amplification solutions
- Conducting room acoustic assessments, providing advice and recommendations, and representing on LA commissioning boards
- Leading on providing specialised input, as outlined in the Specialist Deaf Curriculum Framework (SDCF) in areas such as communication, careers education, self-determination and advocacy, social emotional skills, technology, and family education
- Being part of professional conversations and collaborations with other Educational Audiologists on a regional and national level through membership of the British Association of Educational Audiologists (BAEA) and regional groups, to share best practice, and drive change and improvements as and where needed.

Regional and national Work

The Educational Audiologist has a key role in working regionally and nationally. This enables them to be aware of, and influence, national policies, procedures, and developments, which can then be implemented regionally, keeping services up to date, and using the most effective procedures and equipment. Regional issues can also be raised at a national level, allowing consistent approaches to problems and a larger voice in working with companies, policy setters, and decision makers regionally, nationally, and even globally.



In summary

The role of the Educational Audiologist is varied across the nations according to local policies and practices; however, the key advantages the role brings are the advanced knowledge, training, and experience they bring, and the network of Educational Audiologists who collectively raise the standards of practice nationally and use their influence to continue to improve deaf babies, children, and young people's access to communication and improved outcomes.

Interested in training as an Educational Audiologist?

In the UK, training for the Master of Science (MSc) or Diploma is delivered through an approved and accredited university course. Mary Hare courses, in partnership with Liverpool John Moore University (LJMU), is the only Educational Audiology course provider. For more information, see the BAEA [website](#).

Membership of professional associations

BATOD is the only professional association for QToDs in the UK, and BAEA is the only professional association for Educational Audiologists in the UK. The associations advocate for the interests of QToDs and Educational Audiologists respectively, and the deaf babies, children, and young people they support, engaging with governments and key agencies at national and regional levels. BATOD and BAEA provide ongoing professional support through continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, as well as national and regional meetings. These initiatives ensure members have access to current information, resources, and best practice guidance. The associations offer joint membership for qualified Educational Audiologists and those undertaking the Educational Audiology qualification.

References

BAEA [Role and competencies](#) (2019)

Further reading

MESHGuide Deaf education – [Educational Audiology](#)

BAEA [website](#)

Educational Audiology Association (EAA) [website](#)

EAA [journal](#)

[BATOD Audiology refreshers](#)

BATOD [Articulating the specialism 'The role of the Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People'](#)

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