

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

*This scope of practice document was developed by the New Zealand Audiology Society (NZAS) in consultation with ANZAI and the Ministry of Health. It has been endorsed by the Executive Council of the NZAS as currently representing the roles and professional practices of New Zealand Audiometrists.*

### Introduction

The purpose of this Scope of practice statement is to:

- (a) define the services offered by appropriately qualified audiometrists
- (b) serve as an educational and reference tool for other health professionals, consumers, and members of the general public who seek to understand the role of an audiometrist
- (c) provide information to assist policy makers concerned with regulation, legislation and third party reimbursement
- (d) outline to full and provisional members of NZAS and student audiometrists the activities which require certification in audiometry.

This document is not intended to be an exhaustive list of activities which audiometrists engage in; however it reflects current practice within the profession of audiometry in New Zealand. New practice activities which develop from clinical, technological and scientific advances will also become part of the scopes of practice of an audiometrist. Therefore this document will require regular revision and updating to allow for innovations and advances in the field of audiometry. It is also accepted that some of the activities described may also be within the scope of practice of other related health professionals.

### Definition of an Audiometrist

Audiometrists conduct hearing screening, audiological assessment including diagnostic hearing assessment, rehabilitation and hearing aid fitting and follow-up specific to adults with non-complex hearing loss. Audiometrists may also evaluate hearing assessment results and determine appropriate interventions in adults with non-complex hearing loss subject to criteria set down within this document or as specified by funders of hearing devices where those requirements exceed those in this document.

Audiometrists have successfully completed a recognised qualification (where core competencies have been acquired and assessed during a qualification process as agreed between ANZAI, NZAS, University of Canterbury and University of Auckland) in audiometry which includes core knowledge areas and a practical examination of

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

clinical skills in hearing assessment and hearing rehabilitation. An audiometrist has no less than two years work experience post completion of a recognised qualification in Audiometry. Audiometrists are accountable for their actions to their level of knowledge and experience and in accordance with professional standards and codes of conduct. Each audiometrist has mentoring and support MNZAS audiologist whose name is linked in some way to the client application for funding as deemed appropriate by the MoH.

Audiometrists may be a student associate of NZAS, provisional member or member of NZAS. NZAS requires a minimum period of supervised clinical practice followed by a set of practical and written/oral examinations. Requirements for associate and membership are outlined in the NZAS Audiometrist Supervision and Membership Requirements Booklet.

There are nine competencies for audiometrists' scope of practice.

### Scope of Practice

- i) Demonstrates an ability to apply foundation knowledge of audiology to support audiometrist practice**
  - Understands principles, methods and applications of acoustics as related to audiology.
  - Understands principles, methods and applications of psychoacoustics as related to audiology.
  - Understands anatomy and physiology of the peripheral auditory system, central auditory system, and vestibular system.
  - Understands the mechanisms of disease and injury.
  - Understands the pathology and clinical course of common syndromes, diseases, injuries involving the peripheral auditory, central auditory and vestibular systems.
  - Understands the principles of primary health care and the social determinants of health.
  - Familiarity with the normal processes of communication and auditory behaviour over the life span.
  - Familiarity with basic epidemiological terms about tinnitus and hearing loss.
  - Understands principles, methods and applications of appropriate standards for calibration and maintenance of equipment and the testing environment.

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

### ii) Undertakes hearing screening to identify hearing impairment in adults

- Understands the risk factors for hearing loss in adults.
- Understands hearing screening principles and applications with adult groups.
- Performs an otoscopic examination and examination of the outer ear to assess abnormalities (e.g. whether wax is in the ear canal) that would affect hearing test results.
- Performs hearing screening with adult clients.
- Understands common ototoxic agents and mechanisms.
- Recognises the potential effects of noise exposure on auditory mechanisms and the factors that contribute to noise induced hearing loss.
- Understands basic strategies and procedures for prevention of hearing loss and communication disorders in occupational and non-occupational settings.
- Understands requirements for an appropriate screening environment.

### iii) Manages the requirements for audiological assessments

- Interviews the client and family or significant other to obtain an appropriate in-depth case history relevant to audiological and client needs.
- Appraises information from client files to facilitate planning for audiological assessments.
- Refers immediately (at the time of history taking or assessment) to an audiologist in the event of an abnormal presentation or finding.

### iv) Understands diagnostic hearing assessment to identify hearing impairment in adults

- Demonstrates theoretical knowledge of tests of central auditory function, otoacoustic emission testing and auditory brainstem response testing.
- Understands the principles underpinning audiometric assessment techniques.
- Performs an otoscopic examination and examination of the outer ear to assess abnormalities (e.g. whether wax is in the ear canal) that would affect hearing test results.
- Instructs the client in standard hearing test procedures and maintains engagement with the client throughout the test appointment.

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

- Undertakes pure tone air and bone conduction testing with appropriate masking when needed.
  - Undertakes speech audiometry using a recognised procedure.
  - Undertakes immittance audiometry testing including acoustic reflex testing.
  - Understands infection control procedures and risk factors for infection.
  - Develops a hypothesis regarding the type of hearing loss (conductive, sensory, neural or mixed).
- v) Identify the range of suitable rehabilitation options available to the client**
- Understands theories of aural rehabilitation.
  - Undertakes Hearing Needs Assessments to evaluate the nature and degree of a client's receptive communication difficulties.
  - Understands the use and administration of standard techniques of assessing the impact of hearing loss and the effectiveness of habilitation/rehabilitation.
  - Understands effects of hearing loss on speech perception and communication and their impact in terms of activity limitations and participation restrictions.
  - Has knowledge of audiological and non-audiological factors that may influence rehabilitation.
  - Understands the psychological impact of hearing loss on the individual and their family.
  - Understands the role of affective counselling in achieving appropriate rehabilitative outcomes.
  - Understands the role of hearing therapists in supporting habilitation/rehabilitation goals.
  - Is familiar with community services available for assisting in the aural rehabilitation of adults with hearing loss and/or communication disorders.
  - Has an awareness of issues and concerns of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Community.
  - Understands the range of activities involved in rehabilitative appointments, including test appointment, hearing aid fitting and follow-up appointments.
  - Recognises suitable candidates for hearing aid fitting, implantable devices and aural rehabilitation and refers to an audiologist as appropriate.

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

### **vi) Manages selected hearing aid fittings and follow-ups as directed by an audiologist**

- Critically evaluates device advertising and specifications to obtain information on features.
- Demonstrates knowledge of technological features in the adjustment of hearing aids.
- Understands test box evaluation of hearing aids and demonstrates capability to perform where indicated.
- Demonstrates knowledge of ear mould features and acoustic properties and how these relate to a client's specific needs.
- Performs aural impression procedures to produce ear moulds of manufacturable quality.
- Modifies ear moulds to improve comfort and performance.
- Understands methods for determining target electroacoustic properties of hearing aids.
- Demonstrates the ability to use programming hardware and software of major hearing aid manufacturers.
- Measures and understands hearing aid performance characteristics.
- Verifies hearing aid fitting using real ear measurements and correct interpretation making appropriate device modifications where required.
- Interprets the client's subjective responses to amplification and makes appropriate device modifications when required.
- Demonstrates and undertakes device troubleshooting.
- Provides counselling to clients on the use and care of hearing aids.
- Sets realistic expectations with clients fitted with hearing aids.

### **vii) Maintains professional standards**

- Understands client confidentiality and legislated privacy principles as described in the Health Information Privacy Code.
- Understands the Treaty of Waitangi and its relevance to the health of Maori in New Zealand applying principles of the Treaty to practice.
- Applies principles of cultural safety to practice.
- Understands principles of ethical practice.
- Works within the scope of practice of an audiometrist receiving appropriate supervision from an audiologist.
- Upholds client rights derived from legislation.

---

## Scope of Practice for Audiometrists

---

- Works within professional code of practice, policies and procedures of the audiology service.
- Works according to preferred practice guidelines.

### **viii) Maintains professional development to keep up-to-date with current practice expectations**

- Understands the different scopes of practice across audiology services.
- Understands the role of continuing professional development.
- Participates in a professional development programme including peer review to update knowledge.
- Maintains a current certificate of clinical competence (as issued by the NZAS).

### **ix) Evaluates results of the hearing assessment and determines appropriate interventions**

- Evaluates the consistency of results across the standard test battery and recommends further action for resolution of inconsistencies referring to an audiologist where indicated.
- Analyses, integrates and accurately interprets standard test battery results to produce an accurate, clear and concise report including recommendations for management.
- Records information legibly, accurately, relevantly and systematically including the date of any visits and the name of the person completing both the assessment and evaluation.
- Integrates information from a variety of sources to decide on clinical actions with respect to hearing aid selection and fitting.
- Identifies available funding streams.
- Determines appropriate habilitation/rehabilitation based on the patient history, communication needs, financial, social and physical considerations.

### **References**

- NZAS Audiometrist Supervision and Membership Requirements Booklet (April 2015)