

International Hearing Society Position Statement on Entry Paths into the Hearing Aid Dispensing Profession

The International Hearing Society (IHS) supports two comparable and valid paths for entry into the hearing aid dispensing profession leading to eligibility for hearing aid specialist¹ licensure or registration: the Academic Training Model and the Practice-based Training Model. The Academic Training Model, currently offered by several U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities, is approximately two years in length during which students may or may not be employed in the profession. The Practice-based Training Model consists of on-the-job training and education provided by a licensed hearing aid specialist to a trainee. The trainee may be required to hold a trainee, apprentice, or similar license or permit by the state or province and may typically perform services related to hearing aid dispensing under the supervision of a licensed hearing aid specialist. Trainee education may be supplemented through a home-study module, such as the IHS course, Distance Learning for Professionals in Hearing Health Sciences.

Following completion of either approach the candidate will then need to comply with other conditions to be licensed, which may include, but is not limited to, passing a licensure exam(s), completing an application, and paying applicable fees.

IHS maintains that these two models for entry into the hearing aid dispensing field are both necessary to meet the growing demand for services, and allow both traditional students and non-academic trainees the opportunity to prove entry-level competence.

Approved by the Board of Governors on April 21, 2012.

¹ Also known as a hearing aid dispenser, hearing instrument specialist, hearing aid dealer, hearing aid practitioner, hearing instrument practitioner or hearing aid fitter.