

BSA Certificate Basic Audiometry and Tympanometry

Pre-course information

A BSA certificate is awarded to those who attend the 3-day BSA accredited training course and who pass both the practical and written assessment on the course. No previous training is required, although those attending the course should be employed or due to be employed to carry out audiometry and/or tympanometry in their field with some access to direct and/or remote supervision.

Scope of Practice

Audiometry and Tympanometry should only be undertaken by those whose job description specifically includes it, and where an employer has identified who is liable in the event of any claim for accident or injury etc.

This three-day training course prepares delegates to carry out air conduction and bone conduction audiometry according to BSA procedure. It does not prepare delegates to carry out the masking procedure, and where masking is required, there must be local protocols in place for referral to a suitably qualified audiological professional.

Otoscopy shall be carried out by the delegate to decide whether contraindications exist, and/or if there is any doubt about whether the procedure should continue. In such cases referral must be made to a suitably qualified audiological or medical professional.

Tympanometry shall be used as part of a battery of tests to identify any abnormalities of the middle or outer ear. This training course prepares delegates to interpret tympanometry traces and to explain results to patients/clients and/or refer appropriately. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the supervisor/medical professional to ensure suitable ongoing management for the client.

Overview

The course is largely practical, but will include some theoretical components, including anatomy and physiology of the ear, otoscopy, contraindications and onward referrals, physics of sound, calibration, interpretation of results and record-keeping. Two assessed components (theoretical and practical) are included in the course and delegates will be required to pass both elements in order to achieve the certificate. The course will run from 9.00am-5pm.

Aims and learning outcomes of course

- Perform otoscopy reliably and according to BSA recommended procedure
- Identify contraindications for testing
- Reliably undertake audiometry and tympanometry and record results according to BSA recommended procedures
- Carry out Stage A checks and understand the requirements for calibration of equipment
- Operate a sound level meter and measure ambient noise levels (Audiometry only)
- Interpret results and findings
- Identify the need for further testing and onward referrals
- Communicate results and findings to other professionals

Pre-reading / Homework prior to course

BSA (2013). Recommended procedure for tympanometry

BSA (2011). Pure tone air and bone conduction threshold audiometry with and without masking

BSA (2016). Recommended procedure for ear examination

BAA (2016) Guidelines for the Onward Referral of Adults Directly Referred to Audiology Services. British Academy of Audiology. Available at www.baaudiology.org [Accessed 2018]

Hawke Library. Ear Disease (2003). Available at <http://www.hawkelibrary.com/> [Accessed 2017]

Action on hearing loss (2018) – Communication Tips. Available at <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/live-well/communicate-well/communication-tips/tips-for-hearing-people/> [Accessed 2018]

Frequently asked questions

Am I suitable to undertake the course?

In order to undertake audiometry and tympanometry you need to be comfortable with touching other peoples' ears, gaining close proximity to patients, have good dexterity and eyesight. Some people who are long-sighted or wear bi/varifocal glasses can find otoscopy / depth perception more difficult, so this is something to consider. However, most people with glasses do find their own technique that works for them, so that otoscopy is safe and natural. In all cases, you must be able to act professionally with due care and hygiene. Also see 'scope of practice' above.

Do I need to prepare for the course?

You will be given pre-course homework material to bring with you on the day. You will also be provided with course material handouts and presentations electronically. You need to ensure you are able to review the notes in the evening in order to consolidate your learning. The course is in-depth and will provide you with a lot of new information. This will also help you to pass your written assessment on the final day.

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed on your ability to carry out otoscopy, audiometry and tympanometry according to BSA practice. You will also be assessed with a written exam of 20 multiple choice questions based on the theory content of the course. Delegates must pass both elements of the course in order to achieve the certificate. The pass mark is 70%. If you do not pass the multiple choice questions then you will be given some written homework.

Will I need to take part in the practise sessions?

We like (if possible) for all delegates to take part in the practical sessions, so that you can practise on each other. All delegates will have their ears checked on the day to ensure that their ears are safe for audiometry and tympanometry. When practicing on the course, all delegates will be under close supervision.

You will be asked to fill out a consent form for other delegates to practise the technique on you. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, either verbally or in writing. Do let me know if you think you will not be able / do not consent to take part in the practise sessions, so that this can be prepared for.

What if I don't pass the course?

As the courses are small, with lots of one-to-one attention, most delegates are able to pass the course. However, in the event that you don't pass either the theoretical or practical component of the course, you cannot be awarded the certificate. It is at the examiners discretion whether the delegate can undergo another attempt at the practical or theoretical exam. Repeat assessment may result in extra charges.

Once I am awarded the certificate – what happens next?

Competency in audiometry and tympanometry can only be maintained with continuing practise and review. We recommend that you start out practising with supervision (remote or direct) until you and/or your supervisor agree you are able to carry out audiometry and/or tympanometry without (or with remote) supervision. At all times you should be aware and adhere to your scope of practice (see above).

Are there any other training courses I can do?

There is a BSA certificate available in paediatric impression-taking (under five years), impression-taking in adults (over 5 years) and hearing surveillance (2 days). A course in masking is also available.

TJ Audiology can also provide tailor-made courses. Please contact Tracy James on tjaudiology@outlook.com for more information.