

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSER CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTIONS

The following information specifies the format, content, and materials required for taking the Minnesota Hearing Instrument Dispenser Certification Examination. Please read carefully so that you understand the purposes of the various portions of the examination and bring everything you need for taking the examination.

EXAMINATION FORMAT

The certification examination includes two parts: the written examination and the practical examination. Candidates are required to receive a passing score in each of three major content areas in order to pass the practical portion of the examination. The three major content areas are: 1) Earmold Impression, 2) Audiometry and 3) Hearing Aid Fitting and Servicing. Candidates who receive a passing score in one or two stations, but who do not receive a passing score in all three stations, must retest on subsequent examination date(s) only those stations they did not pass. The passing score for each of the three major content areas is Earmold Impression (28), Audiometry (39), and Hearing Aid Fitting and Servicing (17). In addition, the development of the exam included several activities defined as critical failure (CF). These activities are directly related to patient safety and if performed incorrectly or not performed produce a failure regardless of the score.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

General Information

The use of any books, pamphlets and papers of any kind are prohibited during the test. Answer sheets and pencils will be provided. The use of scratch paper is prohibited. Candidates may do preliminary work or figuring in the margins or on blank pages of their test books. Calculators (silent, no tape) may be used, if considered necessary. No notes, scratch paper, etc, are to leave the examination room. The examination will be monitored and is expected to be an individual effort.

There are 110 multiple-choice items on the written exam, 10 items of which pertain to Minnesota and federal government laws, rules and regulations. You must pass both the multiple choice written exam and the Minnesota law questions.

Time: Examinees will have 2 ½ hours to complete the written exam after all instructions have been given.

Content

- Assess Presenting Problem and Needs
- Test and Analyze Hearing
- Prescribe and Analyze Hearing Aid
- Fit, Adjust and Service Hearing Aid
- Educate and Maintain Professional Relations
- Laws, rules, and regulations of Minnesota & federal government

PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

General Information

Prior to the start of your practical examination:

A. Upon admission to the practical waiting area, you will be asked to refer to a Certification Statement. The statement asks you to agree not to discuss the questions or transmit any information about the examination in any form to any other person. You will sign the statement and give it to the practical examination proctor.

B. You will be given an Examinee Check Sheet. Each section of the practical examination must be checked off upon entering the exam and initialed by one of the examiners upon completion. Between sections of the practical examination, candidates must remain in the practical waiting area. Only upon completion of the entire practical will candidates be allowed to leave the practical waiting area.

Time: Approximately two (2) hours of actual examination time, but waiting time may extend the time spent, to about four (4) hours.

Required candidate competencies

Candidates are tested in three major content areas relating to hearing aid dispensing as indicated below:

Area I. Earmold Impressions: Completely demonstrate preparation for and performance of the sequence of tasks for placing and removing an earmold impression.

Performance Test. Tasks are designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to prepare earmold impressions. The candidate should be able to appropriately instruct the client for earmold impression taking; perform cleansing procedures for hands and equipment; display proper technique in performing an otoscopic ear examination; visually evaluate photographs of eardrums and correctly determine the necessity for medical referral; produce a satisfactory earmold impression; and properly box the earmold impression for shipment. NOTE: The candidate will NOT be allowed to complete the earmold impressions station, if he/she fails to inspect the subject's ear(s) prior to placing the otoblock, or fails to use an otoblock when making an earmold impression.

Area II. Pure Tone and Speech Audiometry: As instructed, perform specific audiometric tests given for the purpose of dispensing a hearing instrument.

Performance Test. Tasks are designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to conduct pure tone audiometric tests, including obtaining VALID pure tone air and bone conduction thresholds using the modified Hughson-Westlake technique, and masking procedures as necessary; correctly prepare audiograms; set up an audiometer for speech testing; and conduct speech audiometric tests. Also, the candidate is expected to interview clients appropriately and identify ear conditions requiring medical referrals. NOTE: If, at any time during this exam, masking is necessary in order to obtain a VALID threshold, the candidate is expected to determine the need for masking and perform the masking procedures routinely.

Written Test. Integration of Masking Concepts is designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to interpret three completed audiograms and identify the need for masking in order to obtain a VALID hearing threshold in air and bone conduction measurement and additionally, explain the reason for doing so.

Area III. Hearing Aids: Fitting and Servicing

Written Test. Hearing Aid Fitting from Audiometric Data is designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to interpret a client's audiometric test results and select the most appropriate electroacoustic matrix for hearing aids; comprehend procedures for remedying problems with hearing aids commonly experienced by clients; and counsel clients on the comparative advantages or disadvantages of different styles of hearing aids.

Performance Test. The test is designed to evaluate the candidate's ability to diagnose problems of malfunctioning hearing aids.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU TO THE EXAMINATION

1. A person on which to make an earmold impression.

You must bring a subject for the earmold impression portion of the practical. If you do not bring a subject, you will not be allowed to take **any** portion of the examination. An Informed Consent Agreement, which your subject must sign, will be supplied at the examination (a sample Informed Consent Agreement is enclosed). **All subjects must be at least 18 years of age. No one under the age of 18 years will be allowed in the examination area.**

Note: It is important that your subject have a sufficiently clean ear canal and no medically-related ear problems so that impressions can be made. It is your responsibility to select such a person as your subject. Check this a few days before you arrive for the examination!

Your subject may be someone who is in the field of hearing instrument dispensing but may not be someone who is taking the examination on the same day.

2. Ear impression materials:

- Otoscope (this is not an earlight)
Cold sterilization to clean the speculum, or disposable tips, prior to making the impression.

A speculum size appropriate for your subject.

- Ear impression material and tools required to make an ear impression
Bring enough for two ear impressions. You will be required to make binaural impressions. You will have approximately 30 minutes to complete the ear impression portion of the exam.
- Cleansing agent for cleaning hands and equipment
- Ear impression box for shipping impression to manufacturer
- Impression blocks of various sizes with nylon thread or dental floss attached (prepared in advance).
- Impression syringe
- Impression mixing container or impression gun and mixing tools
- Blunt scissors
- Glue for fixing impression (unless silicone impression material is used)
- Earmold or custom-molded hearing aid order form
- Earlight
- Tissues

All supplies must be clean and useable for the purpose of taking impressions without danger to the subject.

3. Audiometer with following capabilities:

- Pure tone air and bone conduction testing
- Speech audiometry
- Masking
- Red and blue pencils or pens for recording pure tone results

You will NOT be allowed to complete the audiometric portion of the examination if you fail to bring an audiometer with the above capabilities.

4. Hearing aid trouble-shooting equipment:

- Personal listening tube or earmold
- Appropriate size screwdriver for hearing aid trimmers
- Vision assistance, if needed, to visually inspect the hearing aid for defects. Please notify us if you require other accommodations for troubleshooting hearing aids.
- No batteries or battery testers are required. Batteries will have satisfactory voltage.*

5. One form of identification that includes your signature and photograph

Acceptable forms of identification are a driver's license with photo, passport, or any other official form of identification that contains your photograph and your signature. Signatures will be required prior to and after completing the examination.