

# THE AG BELL ACADEMY FOR LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK

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# INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### About the AG Bell Academy

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language (the Academy) is an independently governed, subsidiary corporation of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Academy was established in 2005 and manages the certification of Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS™) professionals all over the world who work to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing learn to listen and talk. The Academy envisions a future where all individuals and families will have access to certified listening and spoken language professionals available in their immediate geographic area. The Academy's mission is to advance listening and talking through standards of excellence and international certification of professionals.

### What is a listening and spoken language specialist?

LSLS are professionals who have met the eligibility requirements and passed the examination for the LSLS certification. While holding the same certification, they can be designated as either Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVT™) or Certified Auditory-Verbal Educators (LSLS Cert. AVEd™). The LSLS certification indicates that a professional is committed to offering superior service to families wishing to utilize listening and spoken language for their child who is deaf or hard of hearing, and has achieved the highest professional standards available in the field. The LSLS certificate signifies that an individual has achieved her or his education, practical knowledge and experience according to the highest standards and conducts listening and spoken language practice in accordance with the Academy's professional code of conduct.

### Auditory-Verbal Therapy

Auditory-verbal therapy facilitates optimal acquisition of spoken language through listening by newborns, infants, toddlers and young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal therapy promotes early diagnosis, one-on-one therapy, and state-of-the-art audiologic management and technology. Parents and caregivers actively participate in therapy. Through guidance, coaching and demonstration, parents become the primary facilitators of their child's spoken language development. Ultimately, parents and caregivers gain confidence that their child will have access to a full range of academic, social and occupational choices. Auditory-verbal therapy must be conducted in adherence to the "Principles of LSLS Auditory-Verbal Therapy" (see below).

### Auditory-Verbal Education

Auditory-verbal education facilitates optimal acquisition of spoken language through listening by infants, toddlers and children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal education promotes early diagnosis and state-of-the-art audiologic management and technology. Parents and caregivers are involved to the fullest extent possible in their child's language development and education. Auditory-verbal educators promote mainstream education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing by supporting the development of audition, spoken language and vocabulary, reading, and written expression throughout the teaching of academic material. Auditory-verbal educators provide parental support, support services to mainstreamed students and intensive intervention for students in self-contained placements for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory-verbal education helps parents and students build confidence that they will have access to a full range of academic, social and occupational choices. Auditory-verbal education must be conducted in adherence to the "Principles of LSLS Auditory-Verbal Education" (please refer to p. 5).

## CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

### NCCA Standards

The LSLS examination has been designed to comply with the Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NCCA standards address the structure and governance of the certifying agency, the characteristics of the certification program, the information required to be available to applicants, certificants and the public, and the recertification initiatives of the certifying agency.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

The Academy does not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, medical condition, physical disability or marital status.

### Ownership of Exam

All test questions are the property of the Academy. It is forbidden to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these test questions by any means, in whole or in part, without the Academy's written permission. Violators may be subject to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF LSLS AUDIORY-VERBAL THERAPY

Following are the Principles of Auditory-Verbal Therapy. Please read through these and be sure you are committed to all of these principles. Commitment to these principles is required for certification as a LSLS Cert. AVT. Certified Auditory-Verbal professionals and those seeking certification should also be committed to the AG Bell Academy of Principles of Professional Behavior and Professional Code of Conduct.

1. Promote early diagnosis of hearing loss in newborns, infants, toddlers and young children, followed by immediate audiologic management and auditory-verbal therapy.
2. Recommend immediate assessment and use of appropriate, state-of-the-art hearing technology to obtain maximum benefits of auditory stimulation.
3. Guide and coach parents<sup>1</sup> to help their child use hearing as the primary sensory modality in developing listening and spoken language.
4. Guide and coach parents to become the primary facilitators of their child's listening and spoken language development through active consistent participation in individualized auditory-verbal therapy.
5. Guide and coach parents to create environments that support listening for the acquisition of spoken language throughout the child's daily activities.
6. Guide and coach parents to help their child integrate listening and spoken language into all aspects of the child's life.
7. Guide and coach parents to use natural developmental patterns of audition, speech, language, cognition and communication.
8. Guide and coach parents to help their child self-monitor spoken language through listening.

9. Administer ongoing formal and informal diagnostic assessments to develop individualized auditory-verbal treatment plans, to monitor progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of the plans for the child and family.
10. Promote education in regular schools with peers who have typical hearing and with appropriate services from early childhood onwards.

(Adapted from the Principles originally developed by Doreen Pollack in 1970.) Adopted by the AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language on Nov. 6, 2009.

## **THE PRINCIPLES OF LSLs AUDITORY-VERBAL EDUCATION**

A listening and spoken language educator (LSLS Cert. AVEd) teaches children with hearing loss to listen and talk exclusively through listening and spoken language instruction. Certified Auditory-Verbal professionals and those seeking certification should also be committed to the AG Bell Academy of Principles of Professional Behavior and Professional Code of Conduct.

1. Promote early diagnosis of hearing loss in infants, toddlers and young children, followed by immediate audiologic assessment and use of appropriate state of the art hearing technology to ensure maximum benefits of auditory stimulation.
2. Promote immediate audiologic management and development of listening and spoken language for children as their primary mode of communication.
3. Create and maintain acoustically controlled environments that support listening and talking for the acquisition of spoken language throughout the child's daily activities.
4. Guide and coach parents<sup>1</sup> to become effective facilitators of their child's listening and spoken language development in all aspects of the child's life.
5. Provide effective teaching with families and children in settings such as homes, classrooms, therapy rooms, hospitals or clinics.
6. Provide focused and individualized instruction to the child through lesson plans and classroom activities while maximizing listening and spoken language.
7. Collaborate with parents and professionals to develop goals, objectives and strategies for achieving the natural developmental patterns of audition, speech, language, cognition and communication.
8. Promote each child's ability to self-monitor spoken language through listening.
9. Use diagnostic assessments to develop individualized objectives, to monitor progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching activities.
10. Promote education in regular classrooms with peers who have typical hearing, as early as possible, when the child has the skills to do so successfully.

## APPLYING FOR THE EXAM

### ROUTES TO LSLS CERTIFICATION

Professionals who wish to pursue certification typically find they are more eligible to pursue one route to certification over another based on their particular work environment(s). The LSLS AVT designation is usually pursued by professionals who are able to complete the required clock hours providing individual AVT with children and their parent(s). The LSLS AVEEd designation is usually pursued by professionals who are able to complete the required clock hours providing AVEEd services in a group environment in which a parent may or may not be present. Some professionals may work in an environment that lends itself to pursuing either designation. Additionally, there is an Administrator Route (formerly Route C) that is available for supervisors and administrators (who have previously provided direct services in a program that teaches listening and spoken language) to pursue through December 31, 2020. Questions regarding routes to certification should be directed to the Academy.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

In order to become a certified LSLS, professionals seeking certification must demonstrate their eligibility and then pass an examination. To be eligible to take the LSLS examination, professionals seeking certification must demonstrate satisfactory completion of the Certification Route for their intended designation. Completion of requirements and documentation of qualifications in the following areas are required for eligibility to take the examination:

- Academic
- Credential/licensure
- Continuing education
- A formal written description of auditory-verbal practice
- Professional experience
- Mentoring by a certified LSL professional
- Parent letters of recommendation (2)
- Professional letters of recommendation (2)

**All professionals seeking certification must comply with the eligibility requirements outlined in the LSLS applications effective during the year they begin documenting their eligibility requirements.** For example, if an applicant begins documenting or “counting” professional hours, mentored sessions or continuing education credits in 2017, then he/she is held to the requirements published in 2017 and should submit the LSLS application provided in 2017 at the time they apply for the LSLS examination.

Authorization to take the LSLS online examination is contingent upon the professional seeking certification appropriately fulfilling ALL of the eligibility requirements in his or her chosen Certification Route (as outlined in the LSLS application packet) and approval of the AG Bell Academy.

#### Academic Requirements

Professionals seeking certification must have one of the following academic degrees: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree or international equivalent in audiology, speech-language pathology or education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## **Request for Preliminary Review of Academic Background**

If you do not have an academic degree (either bachelor's or master's level) in audiology, speech-language pathology or education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, you may request a review of your academic background. To request a preliminary review of your academic background, submit the Service Request Form on p.39 of this handbook and send it with a copy of your degree, transcripts and course descriptions from your coursework.

Upon receipt of your transcripts and course descriptions, the Academy's Certification Committee will determine whether your academic background meets the eligibility requirements for LSLS certification, or whether further evaluation from a third party agency is warranted to make a determination. The charge for a preliminary review of your academic background is \$40.\*

Should the Academy's Certification Committee determine the need for a third party review, names of reputable agencies will be provided to the candidate who would then pursue and pay for that review according to the requirements of the chosen agency.

*\*Professionals whose education has been pursued in a non-U.S. institution typically are referred directly for a third party review*

## **Credentials**

A professional seeking certification must hold a current license or credential to practice audiology, speech-language pathology or education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing in their geographic locale. To meet this requirement, the professional seeking certification must show documentation of a current license, certificate or other credential required by the state, province or country in which they practice. The most common credentials used to meet this requirement are a Certificate of Clinical Competence in audiology or speech-language pathology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), a state/provincial license in audiology or speech-language pathology, or a state/provincial diploma in education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Other credentials may be acceptable if they are a municipal requirement for the professional seeking certification's professional practice. Applicants practicing in a country where licensing is not available or necessary to practice, the mentee is required to submit a letter from the university indicating that the degree meets the Academy's requirements.

## **Continuing Education**

Professionals seeking certification must complete at least 80 hours of continuing education within the nine domains of LSLS knowledge (see p. 22 for a full description) after receiving their professional degree. At least 50% (40 hours) of the 80 hours of continuing education must be completed within the 3 to 5-year application period. Continuing education hours (or CEUs) must be approved by the Academy prior to submitting the application to sit for the LSLS examination.

Continuing Education Activity Option	Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed
Attending Academy-approved educational programs	50 CEUs	70 CEUs
Development and/or presentation of an Academy-approved program		10 CEUs
Publishing a peer-reviewed article		10 CEUs
Structured observation of certified LSLS professionals – must be accompanied by a copy of the appropriate application attachment for each of the 10 hours of observation. For professional seeking AVEd certification, at least 3 of the observed sessions must be of a LSLS certified professional using parent coaching strategies while working with an individual child and the child’s parent or caregiver.	10 CEUs	

### Professional Experience

Professionals seeking certification must complete a required number of clock hours of professional experience in the provision of listening and spoken language practice within a three to five year timeframe completed just prior to the submission of the application. This cannot include clock hours spent using formal visual communication systems such as Cued Speech, sign language, sign systems or formal instruction in speech reading. A portion of the professional experience hours may be in related activities, such as communication assessments, parent conferences, in-service of and consultations with school personnel, school visits, and assistance with audiologic evaluations. The total number of required hours and the minimum and maximum number of hours for each category is specified for each certification route on the LSLS application. Professionals seeking certification who were taught/supervised by a certified LSLS professional as part of their degree may apply up to 75 hours from their supervised auditory-verbal practicum to their professional experience requirements if it was within the past five years. Professionals seeking certification must submit a course outline along with the transcript and a letter from his or her supervisor to verify these hours.

### Commit to the Principles of LSLS (AVT or AVEd)

All professionals seeking certification must sign their commitment to the Principles of LSLS for their intended designation.

### Mentoring

The professional seeking certification must be observed and evaluated by a certified LSLS mentor while conducting a series of listening and spoken language sessions. The mentor must be a certified LSLS professional with a certification in good standing. Ideally, applicants will be mentored by a LSLS of their intended designation. However LSLS mentors of either designation (LSLS Cert. AVT or LSLS Cert. AVEd) may mentor any applicant. When a LSLS professional is acting as a mentor and the mentee is NOT of the same designation, the mentor may need to seek the input of another certified professional. This may occur when the professional experience of the mentor is outside the scope of practice of the mentee. In this instance, the mentor shall collaborate with a LSLS of the mentee’s intended designation (AVT/AVEd) in order to provide an appropriate mentorship.

The mentor should observe the professional seeking certification providing listening and spoken language sessions or classes and provide the professional seeking certification with appropriate feedback via the forms included in the LSLS applications. The professional seeking certification must provide the mentor with documentation of case history, audiologic information (including speech perception scores), diagnostic

evaluations of spoken language skills and a prepared lesson plan. Professionals seeking certification who are working with remote mentors may fulfill this requirement through the use of video or internet technology. See the LSLS applications for specifics on the mentoring requirement for each application route.

### **Mentoring for Administrator / Supervisor Route**

The Administrator/Supervisor Route (previously known as Route C) is an option only for those administrators/supervisors who successfully complete all certification requirements prior to December 31, 2020 after which time the Administrator/Supervisor Route will no longer be an option. Those administrators/supervisors who are seeking certification through the administrator/supervisor route towards achievement of the LSLS Cert. AVEd designation must be mentored by a certified LSLS mentor who is also a administrator/supervisor of a program that utilizes listening and spoken language. Specific questions related to this Route should be addressed to the Academy: [Academy@agbell.org](mailto:Academy@agbell.org).

The mentoring requirement for this route includes two aspects:

1. Structured evaluations/observations by the applicant of another professional in the applicant's program.
2. Structured evaluations by the LSLS mentor of the applicant for all required sessions.

### **Professional and Parent Letters of Recommendation**

Letters from parents should describe a typical listening and spoken language session with the professional seeking certification. Letters must be in the parents' own words and should provide an assessment of the performance of the professional seeking certification. If the recommending parents do not speak English, the professional seeking certification should send the original signed letter of reference with an attached translation. Two letters are required from parents.

Letters from professionals should describe the candidate's competency in the development of listening and spoken language skills and effectiveness at working with children and their families. One of these letters must be from a supervisor/professional colleague describing the professional's experience with auditory verbal practice over the three to five qualifying years. If the recommending professionals do not speak English, the professional seeking certification should send the original signed letter of reference with an attached translation. Two letters are required from professionals.

### **Role of the LSLS Mentor**

The role of the LSLS mentor is to counsel and guide professionals seeking certification to prepare them for the LSLS exam and to position them to be effective listening and spoken language specialists. Mentors should review the current eligibility requirements and ensure adherence to the Principles of LSLS for the applicant's intended designation. The LSLS mentor should also review the AG Bell Academy Principles of Professional Practice and the AG Bell Academy Rules of Conduct with each professional they mentor.

Individuals who serve as a mentor shall share information about the entire scope of practice and principles of all LSLS professionals. In addition, mentors will share their own professional experiences with the mentee. Principle III of the AG Bell Academy Principles of Professional Behavior states "Individuals engaging in any aspect of the profession should perform within the scope of their competence, education, training, and

experience.” This also applies to professionals acting as mentors and especially when acting as a mentor for a mentee of a different designation. When a LSLS professional is acting as a mentor and the mentee is NOT of the same designation, the mentor may need to seek the input of another certified professional. This may occur when the professional experience of the mentor is outside the scope of practice of the mentee. In this instance the mentor shall collaborate with a LSLS of the mentee’s intended designation (AVT/AVEd) in order to provide an appropriate mentorship.

The mentor will provide structured feedback and guidance to professionals seeking certification upon observations of sessions and classes via the Mentor’s Evaluation Form (included in the LSLS application packet). All mentors must be currently certified as a LSLS professional.

### **Finding a Mentor**

Professionals seeking certification must identify a certified LSLS professional willing to be a mentor during their training process. Currently, any professional who holds a current LSLS certification in good standing is eligible to serve as a mentor.

To find a LSLS in your area, please refer to the Locate a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist page of the Academy’s website. Select your locale and information can be found for individual LSL professionals including their mentoring status. Mentors may provide much or all of the required supervision remotely, using live or recorded video technology.

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Professionals seeking certification must submit their documentation online via the Academy’s secure FTP site, or by mail in a three-ring binder with tabbed section dividers on single-sided, three-hole punched paper.

All application materials must be submitted in English.

### **Application Deadlines**

The Academy posts quarterly application deadlines. Applications must be received by the Academy by the deadline posted on the Academy’s website in order for an applicant to be approved to take the examination in the following quarter. Applications received after deadline dates are forwarded for consideration for the next eligible test quarter. For example, consider this scenario. The deadline for applications is August 1 for the fourth quarter (Oct-Nov-Dec). If your application does not reach the AG Bell Academy by that deadline, your application would be forwarded for consideration for the next test quarter (Jan-Feb-March).

The information provided on the application form and accompanying documents will be used by the Academy’s Certification Committee to determine the applicant’s eligibility to take the exam.

1. Please type or clearly print the information on your application.
2. Enclose all supporting written documentation/attachments (see Written Documents Checklist).
3. Enclose the appropriate application fee.
4. Upload (or mail) one complete application, along with payment information.

### **Online Application (Preferred):**

To access the FTP server to upload the LSLS application packet (as a single PDF/.zip file), applicants can use Web-based JAVA FTP Client from any Windows computer:

http://Files8.cyberlynk.net/client

Username: Acad\_Apply

Password: Acad\_Apply

All electronic submissions must be named after the applicant (last name, first name). Applicants will not be able to see that their file has been uploaded due to security measures in place to protect the privacy of all applicants; however, they will receive a confirmation email from Academy staff to verify receipt of the submission. Files must be uploaded by the published application deadline. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed until the next application review deadline, and when a completed application is submitted. Please see the Instructions for Uploading Applications on the Academy website for more information.

For online application submissions, the applicant must mail their passport photos to the Academy and include a letter stating their name, and the desired test quarter (e.g. Jan-Feb-March or 1st quarter).

### **Hard Copy Application Binder:**

#### **Mail to:**

AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language  
3417 Volta Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20007

Professionals seeking certification should keep a complete copy of the application for their own records as application materials will not be returned to them.

Completed applications must be received by the published deadline for the preferred test quarter. Any applications submitted with missing components will not be reviewed until the next application review deadline, and when a completed application is submitted.

Applications received after an application deadline will not be considered until the following LSLS examination administration. The information that you provide on the application form and accompanying documents will be reviewed by the Academy's Certification Committee to determine eligibility to take the LSLS examination.

- The Academy does not confirm receipt of applications. If you would like to know whether or not your application was received, you may choose to send your application using a service that can confirm delivery; please do not require a signature upon delivery. The Academy does not accept any responsibility nor make exceptions for any delays that may occur due to delivery confirmation or a signature requirement.
- Late and incomplete applications will not be considered under any circumstances.
- Faxed applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- Applicants are encouraged to keep a photocopy of their application.
- Applications will not be returned for any reason.
- Please do not contact the Academy seeking an exception.

## FAQs ABOUT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS/PROCEDURES

### **How do I get started working toward my LSLS certification?**

You must have a minimum of a bachelor's or master's degree in speech-language pathology, audiology or education of the deaf as well as the legal ability to independently deliver services to children with hearing loss and their families in your area of residence prior to beginning the LSLS application process. To download a Cert. AVT or Cert. AVEEd application, visit: <http://www.agbell.org/AcademyDocument.aspx?id=628>

### **When can I start “counting” hours toward my application requirements?**

Regardless of which level of academic degree an applicant submits (either a bachelor's or master's degree) all requirements must be documented after the degree was awarded to the applicant. This means that after receiving your degree, a minimum of three years of professional experience, mentorship and continuing education must be documented before you will be eligible to apply for the examination.

### **Can I submit copy of my bachelor's or master's degree diploma in lieu of a copy of the official transcripts?**

No. An official transcript from the university/institution where the degree was earned is required.

### **I have a master's degree in one of the three outlined disciplines (audiology, education of the deaf, speech-language pathology), but my bachelor's degree is not in one of these areas. Do I meet the academic requirement?**

Yes, the minimum requirement is a bachelor's degree; therefore, as long as your bachelor's or master's degree is in one of these areas and can be confirmed by official transcripts in English, you meet the academic requirements.

### **Can any of the work for my undergraduate/bachelor's degree be counted toward my professional experience requirement?**

Yes. Practice obtained from a bachelor's or master's level program can be applied toward the professional experience requirement for the LSLS certification, as long as supervision is provided by a LSLS certified professional. Please see the application documents for your chosen designation for information on applying the practicum experience toward your requirements. Professionals seeking certification who were taught/supervised by a LSLS certified professional as part of their degree may apply up to 75 hours from their supervised auditory-verbal practicum if it was within the past five years.

### **Can I complete my mentoring requirement with more than one LSLS mentor?**

Yes, more than one LSLS can mentor an applicant. However, each of these mentors must be LSLS certified and in good standing, and the applicant must provide the appropriate documentation for each mentored session. Depending on the LSLS mentor's own scope of professional experiences, it may be advantageous to work with more than one mentor to gain additional perspectives on auditory verbal practice. When a LSLS professional is acting as a mentor and the mentee is NOT of the same designation, the mentor may need to seek the input of another certified professional. This may occur when the professional experience of the mentor is outside the typical scope of practice of the mentee. In this instance the mentor shall collaborate with a LSLS of the mentee's intended designation (AVT/AVEEd) in order to provide an appropriate mentorship. This would be another instance when the use of another mentor is needed.

**I'm applying for certification and have already completed forms received last year. Will these old forms be accepted in this year's application process?**

All LSLS applicants are held to the requirements of the year they begin documenting their application requirements, and should submit that year's published LSLS application at the time of submission.

**Should I fill out Attachment C-2: 10 Hours of Structured Observation for all 10 hours of observation?**

Yes, you do need to complete the form for all 10 hours of observation.

**I obtained many of my structured observation hours with a LSLS who no longer lives in my state. Do I need to have them sign off on these forms?**

Yes, you need the observed LSLS to sign the form. Faxed or scanned/emailed copies will be accepted.

**I have worked with several LSLS and have been supervised at different times with a variety of clients/students. For my required mentored sessions, can one person sign off on all of my paperwork or do I need to have a mentor sign the document?**

One mentor can sign to verify the 20 sessions on Attachment E of the application. However, the LSLS who completes the long-form evaluations (Attachment F-1) should be the person who mentored the session described.

**My direct supervisor is currently unable to write a letter confirming my professional experience. Can I submit a letter from another supervisor with whom I have frequent contact?**

Yes, a letter from a secondary supervisor would be accepted if your direct supervisor is unable to complete this requirement.

**What if I do not have a supervisor because I work as a sole practitioner/educator (e.g. in private practice)?**

Mentors (or an office administrator) can sign off on self-employed individuals, if logs/timesheets are made available for vetting by the individual signing off. Office administrators would be required to sign a notarized document indicating that their signature is an attestation to their ability to determine that these hours of service were provided by the mentee on these dates and for the length of time indicated.

**I work in a Total Communication program. Can I apply for LSLS Cert. AVEEd?**

Typically, professionals in Total Communication programs provide a learning environment that incorporates visual systems to support communication. It is often difficult for these applicants to achieve the necessary clock hours of listening and spoken language intervention (900 clock hours within the last 3 to 5 years and employed for at least 3 of the 5 past years) required for LSLS certification. LSLS Cert. AVEEd professionals must develop their specialty skills in listening and spoken language in active support of children learning language through audition while developing their specialty skills in listening and spoken language. Applicants from Total Communication schools may find it difficult to earn the required professional clock hours for certification and are strongly encouraged to assess their caseload with the LSLS eligibility requirements in mind to determine if they are able to meet this requirement over a three to five year period. If the applicant's employment situation allows him/her to provide required amount of auditory-verbal education to children using listening and spoken language as their mode of communication, these hours can be "counted" toward the professional experience requirement for LSLS certification, pending these hours are verified by the applicant's supervisor or other allowable person (if applicant is a sole practitioner/educator).

### **How can I obtain continuing education units? Are there classes online?**

Continuing education units (CEUs) can be earned at conventions, seminars, workshops, in-service trainings, etc., in the field. There are many options available for individuals to acquire their CEUs, which are explained in detail on the Academy's website. All educational events must be approved by the Academy in order to fulfill CEU requirements for the LSLS application or recertification purposes.

### **What is the best way to include the passport photos?**

Passport photos should be paper clipped to the first page of the application (Attachment A) and should have the professional seeking certification's name printed on the back of each photo. For online application submissions, the applicant must mail their passport photos to the Academy and include a letter stating their name, application submission date, and requested examination date and location.

### **Do all mentor observations have to be completed before taking the test?**

Yes, you need to meet all eligibility requirements for your chosen application route before you apply to take the test, so observations should be completed and documented before submitting the application.

### **Do applicants or LSLS mentors need to register with the Academy prior to beginning the application process?**

No. Applicants should not submit any portion of the LSLS application to the Academy until it is complete and ready to be reviewed for eligibility for the LSLS exam. Applicants do not need to declare their intent to apply for the exam, but are encouraged to download the current LSLS application from the Academy's website, which enters their information into the Academy's database ensuring that the applicant will receive important LSLS news and/or information relating to the LSLS application process.

### **Is there a study guide for the test?**

The online Core Competencies/Test Domains document shows the content of the exam and the online Recommended Reading List provides guidance on how to prepare. Additionally, the Academy offers an online practice examination for those who wish to take it.

### **Is it still okay to handwrite the application?**

Yes, although online submission is the preferred format. Handwritten applications will be accepted and should be organized according to the outline in the LSLS applications.

### **Once I have earned my certification, how often do I have to renew it and what is the renewal process?**

Certificates are valid for two years for the certification start date. LSLS are required to submit documentation of 15 hours of approved CEUs and pay a US\$195 fee every two years.

### **How do I find the application form?**

The Application Packets are available on the Academy's website and are obtained by completing the registration form. After you complete the registration, an email link will be sent for you to download the Application Packet for either LSLS Cert. AVT and/or LSLS Cert. AVEEd.

### **What are the fees for the LSLS certification?**

The application and examination fee is US\$395 for members of the Alexander Graham Bell Association and US\$495 for nonmembers. Payment is accepted in US dollars only and can be made by check, money order, VISA, MasterCard or American Express. Checks should be made payable to the AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language. Applicants will be assessed a \$50 fee for bounced checks or declined credit cards. Payment must be submitted with the application.

### **When will I know if I've met the eligibility requirements to sit for the exam?**

Academy staff will contact each professional seeking certification and inform them of their eligibility status at least 30 days prior to the requested exam quarter.

### **What is the Academy's refund policy?**

Should an application be incomplete or fail to meet eligibility requirements, the application fee will be refunded to the applicant, less an administrative fee of US\$75. Application materials will not be returned. No other exceptions or refunds will be made.

### **What is the Academy's policy regarding exam deferrals?**

If an applicant has been accepted to take the LSLS exam, but cannot take the examination during the planned quarter may request to sit the exam in one of the following quarter for a period of up to one year. Deferrals require at \$50 processing fee. Exam professionals seeking certification may defer taking the examination for up to one year only. Requests must be received in writing at least 14 days prior to the examination date, and can be submitted using the Service Request Form on p. 39 of this handbook. Should professionals seeking certification defer, the Academy will hold the application fee until the following year. If an exam professional seeking certification does not take the exam within the 12-month deferment period, they will forfeit their application fee. Professionals seeking certification who do not sit for the exam after the 12 months deferment period and wish to take the exam at a later date must submit a new application, including all fees and documentation required, at the time of resubmission.

### **What is the Academy's policy regarding exam cancellations?**

If a candidate needs to cancel, they must do so prior to 72 hours before their scheduled exam time. If not, then the candidate will be charged the proctor fee due to late cancellation. Professionals seeking certification who are unable to sit for a scheduled exam may request to cancel their exam and receive a 50% refund of their application fee. Refund requests must be submitted to the Academy at least 14 days prior to the exam using the LSLS Service Request Form. There is no fee for cancelling your exam, but note that you will only receive a 50% refund of your application fee. Professionals seeking certification who do not request a refund and do not sit for the exam forfeit all fees. Application fees may not be transferred.

### **How do I find a mentor?**

Individuals who are interested in becoming a LSLS will need to find a certified LSLS professional willing to be a mentor during their application process. Any LSLS in good standing is eligible to serve as a mentor. To find a LSLS in your area, please refer to the Locate a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist page of the Academy's website. Select your locale and information can be found for individual LSL professionals including their mentoring status. Mentors may provide much or all of the required supervision remotely, using live or recorded video technology.

### **What if there isn't a LSLS in my area?**

If there is not a suitable mentor in your area, you may work remotely with a mentor by using live and recorded video technology. For example, your mentor can supervise sessions via online live meeting technology, or by reviewing recorded sessions and sending feedback and guidance via email on the appropriate LSLS application attachments.

### **Do I have to pay my mentor?**

The decision of whether to charge for mentoring is left up to the individual mentor.

### **Can Academy staff help me find a mentor?**

The Academy does not endorse one LSLS mentor over another. Moreover, Academy staff may not know which active mentors are currently accepting mentees based on work load, location, etc. It is recommended that professionals work with LSLS professionals at their place of employment, or use the online registry to identify a mentor.

## **AFTER APPLYING FOR THE EXAM**

### **APPLICATION STATUS**

The Academy's Certification Committee will review all applications and professionals seeking certification will be notified of their eligibility within 30 days of the requested examination date. Academy staff cannot discuss eligibility with any individual other than the applicant.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

Academy staff will contact applicants within 30 days of the requested examination date via email. Eligible applicants will be provided with details on the exam registration, as well as important information regarding exam administration policies. Ineligible applicants will be notified of what elements of their application did not meet the certification requirements.

### **RETESTING POLICY**

Academy policy states that, "At least three months (90+ days) in between test administrations is required for an applicant/examinee who does not pass the exam." Individuals who do not pass the exam upon three administrations must meet additional certification requirements in order to be eligible to take the exam four or more times. Those requirements can found on the Academy's website.

### **REFUND POLICY**

Should your application be incomplete or fail to meet eligibility requirements, the application fee will be refunded, less an administrative fee of \$75. Application materials will not be returned.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Requests to cancel an exam appointment must be received at least five business days before your scheduled appointment. If you are more than 30 minutes late for an exam, fail to appear for your appointment or do not provide notice of intent to reschedule/defer the exam at least 14 business days prior to your scheduled appointment, your examination fee will be forfeited and you will need to follow the procedures for scheduling a retest appointment and submit the appropriate fees.

## DEFERMENT POLICY

If your application to take the LSLS exam has been approved, but you cannot take the next scheduled examination, you may request to sit for the exam during a following quarter up to one year in the future. Your request must be received in writing at least 14 days prior to your scheduled examination date. Should you defer, the Academy will hold your application fee until the following year. If you do not take the exam within the 12-month deferment period, you will forfeit your application fee. Professionals seeking certification who do not sit for the exam after the 12-month deferment period and wish to take the exam at a later date must submit a new application, including all fees and documentation required, at the time of resubmission. To request a deferral of the test, complete the Service Request form on p. 39 of this handbook. Fill out the form completely and mail it with the US \$50 administration fee to the address listed on the request form.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

### GENERAL INFORMATION

To help ensure adequate preparation for taking the certification examination, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Review the Academy's nine domains of LSLS knowledge (p. 22), which shows the content areas of the examination and the body of knowledge that a professional must have in order to qualify for and pass the LSLS exam for the LSLS certification.
2. The Academy's list of references and recommended reading for professionals seeking certification may prove helpful in the review of the subject areas included on the examination. (Note: The listing of these references is intended for use as a study aid only. The Academy does not intend the list to be exhaustive or to imply endorsement of these specific references, nor are the test questions necessarily taken from these sources.)
3. The AG Bell Academy offers an online practice exam designed to mirror the LSLS certification exam in style and question format as well as LSLS domain content. For more information, please see the Academy's website (Note: Taking the LSLS practice exam will not provide the user with an indication of their overall preparedness for the real LSLS examination, nor does it guarantee better performance on the LSLS examination for those who take it.)

## Test domains and the Nine Domains of Knowledge for Listening and Spoken Language Specialist Certification

The Academy conducted a practice analysis consisting of several activities: survey development, survey dissemination and analysis of survey results. The survey was forwarded to professionals in the field of listening and spoken language and a detailed statistical analysis of the survey responses was conducted.

The results of the survey determined the task and knowledge domains that are relevant for today's listening and spoken language professionals. The Academy then developed, based on the practice analysis results, a set of core competencies and the body of knowledge that a professional must have in order to qualify for and pass the test for the LSLS Certification. The core competencies also serve as the basis for the content areas/test domains on the test. The relative weights of each content area are shown in the Core Competencies and represent the approximate percentage of questions on the examination that cover each content area. Professionals seeking certification should be prepared to demonstrate a mastery of these core competencies. The list of core competencies and test domains can be found on p. 22 of this handbook.

### Explanation of Reference List

The Academy provides professionals seeking certification with a list of references and readings that are recommended for use in preparing to take the LSLS test. Not all useful references for study are included on this list, nor will reading these references guarantee that an applicant will pass the LSLS examination. These books, articles and websites are meant to provide some guidance regarding the body of knowledge found on the LSLS examination and can be found on the Academy's website.

### Materials Available for Purchase from AG Bell

In addition to the books available at AG Bell's bookstore, the association also offers electronic copies of all The Volta Review articles and back issues of Volta Voices. Copies of The Volta Review articles can be purchased from the association for \$10 per article. Back issues of Volta Voices are available for free to all members of AG Bell and can be found in the members-only section of the AG Bell website. An electronic package containing all of The Volta Review and Volta Voices articles on the Recommended Reading list on the website may be purchased from AG Bell for \$40.

## CORE COMPETENCIES/DOMAINS OF KNOWLEDGE FOR LISTENING & SPOKEN LANGUAGE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION FOR THE LSLS EXAMINATION

Content Areas/Domains covered in the LSLS examination with the relative weights of each:

**Domain 1.** Hearing and Hearing Technology – 12%

**Domain 2.** Auditory Functioning – 16%

**Domain 3.** Spoken Language Communication – 16%

**Domain 4.** Child Development – 9%

**Domain 5.** Parent Guidance, Education and Support – 13%

**Domain 6.** Strategies for Listening and Spoken Language Development – 18%

**Domain 7.** History, Philosophy and Professional Issues – 4%

**Domain 8.** Education (The focus of this domain is on the development and expansion of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the child’s progress in the general education curriculum.) – 6%

**Domain 9.** Emergent Literacy (The focus of this domain is on the development of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the acquisition and advancement of literacy.) – 6%

The following is a list of the nine content areas/test domains with the addition of their competencies to classify the LSLS body of knowledge. Questions on the LSLS examination will address these competencies.

## **Domain 1. Hearing and Hearing Technology**

### **A. Hearing Science/Audiology**

1. Anatomy of the ear and neural pathways
2. Physiology of hearing
3. Physics of sound (e.g., decibel, frequency, sound waves)
4. Psychoacoustics (e.g., HL, SPL, SL)
5. Auditory perception (e.g., masking, localization, binaural hearing)
6. Speech acoustics
7. Environmental acoustics
  - a. Signal-to-noise ratio
  - b. Distance
  - c. Noise
  - d. Reverberation
8. Causes of hearing impairment
9. Types of hearing impairment and disorders (e.g., site of lesion, age of onset)
10. Early identification and high risk factors
11. Audiogram, audiogram interpretation and implications to speech perception
12. Audiologic assessments
  - a. Behavioral
  - b. Speech perception testing
  - c. Electrophysiologic (e.g., OAE, ABR ASSR, acoustic immittance)
  - d. Hearing aid evaluation (e.g., real ear/probe microphone, electroacoustic analysis)
  - e. Cochlear implant candidacy, surgery, activation, functional application of programs

### **B. Hearing Technology**

1. Sensory devices (e.g., hearing aids, cochlear implants, vibro-tactile aids, transposition aids)
2. Assistive listening devices (e.g., personal FM/auditory trainers, soundfield FM & infrared (IR) systems)
3. Earmold acoustics (e.g., impact of the earmold characteristics on the transmission of sound)
4. Hearing technology troubleshooting strategies

## **Domain 2. Auditory Functioning**

- A. Auditory skill development
- B. Infant auditory development (e.g., neural development, plasticity)
- C. Functional listening skill assessments and evaluations, both formal and informal
- D. Acoustic phonetics as related to speech perception and production
- E. Functional use of audition

## **Domain 3. Spoken Language Communication**

### **A. Speech**

- 1. Anatomy of speech/voice mechanism
- 2. Physiology of speech/voice mechanism
- 3. Suprasegmental, segmental, coarticulation aspects of speech production
- 4. Sequences of typical speech development (e.g., pre-verbal, articulation, phonology, intelligibility)
- 5. Sequence of speech development in clients with various sensory devices (e.g., hearing aids, cochlear implants, vibro-tactile aids, transposition aids)
- 6. Speech production assessment measures (both formal and informal)
- 7. Teaching techniques in speech production
  - a. Prerequisite skills for phoneme production
  - b. Developmental (habilitative) and remedial (rehabilitative) speech development
  - c. Suprasegmental and segmental aspects of speech facilitation
  - d. Auditory strategies for speech facilitation
  - e. Visual and tactile strategies for speech facilitation
  - f. Integration of speech targets into spoken language
- 8. Speech characteristics of children without auditory access to the full speech spectrum
- 9. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
- 10. Impact of auditory access on speech production

### **B. Language**

- 1. Impact of auditory access on language development
- 2. Aspects of language (e.g., phonology, pragmatics, morphology, syntax, semantics)
- 3. Sequence of typical language development (e.g., prelinguistic, communicative intent, linguistic)
- 4. Language assessment measures (both formal and informal)
- 5. Teaching techniques in receptive and expressive language
- 6. Impact of speech acoustics on choice of language targets (e.g., inside/beside, he/she)
- 7. Development of complex conversational competence
- 8. Development of divergent/convergent thinking
- 9. Figurative language and higher level semantic usage

## **Domain 4. Child Development**

- A. Sequence of typical child development
  - 1. Cognitive
  - 2. Gross and fine motor
  - 3. Self-help
  - 4. Play
- B. Influence of associated factors on child development (e.g., cultural, community, family)
- C. Conditions that are present in addition to hearing impairment (e.g., sensory integration deficits, visual challenges, Autism Spectrum Disorders, neurological disorders, learning disabilities)

## **Domain 5. Parent Guidance, Education and Support**

- A. Family systems (e.g., boundaries, roles, extended family, siblings)
- B. Impact of hearing impairment on family (e.g., coping mechanisms, family functioning, stages of grief)
- C. Family counseling techniques (e.g., active listening, reflective listening, questioning, open ended statements)
- D. Family coaching and guidance techniques (e.g., demonstration, modeling, turning over the task, providing feedback, co-teaching)
- E. Impact of associated factors on parent guidance (e.g., cultural, language in the home, economic, lifestyle, community)
- F. Behavior management techniques
- G. Adult learning styles

## **Domain 6. Strategies for Listening and Spoken Language Development**

- A. Learning to listen strategies (e.g., creating optimal listening environment, positioning to maximize auditory input)
- B. Pausing (wait time) appropriately
- C. Language facilitation techniques (e.g., expansion and modeling)
- D. Prompting techniques (e.g., linguistic, phonological, acoustic, physical, printed written prompts)
- E. Responsive teaching (e.g., listening to the client and modifying according to the client's language and speech production)
- F. Creating a need for the child to talk
- G. Acoustic highlighting techniques
- H. Auditory presentation prior to visual presentation (e.g., say before seeing)
- I. Spoken language modeling
- J. Meaningful, interactive conversation
- K. Experience-based, naturalistic language activities
- L. Experience and personalized books

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- I. Spoken language modeling
- J. Meaningful, interactive conversation
- K. Experience-based, naturalistic language activities
- L. Experience and personalized books

## **Domain 7. History, Philosophy and Professional Issues**

### **A. History and Philosophy**

1. History of education of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
2. Historical perspective of communication approaches
3. Current communication approaches and principles for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing

### **B. Professional Issues**

1. Ethical requirements and issues
2. Professional development requirements and opportunities
3. Evidence-based practice and research findings

## **Domain 8. Education (The focus of this domain is on the development and expansion of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the child's progress in the general education curriculum.)**

- A. Continuum of educational and community (e.g., child care, respite care) placements
- B. Curricular objectives that meet local standards in areas of instruction
- C. Strategies for pre-teaching and re-teaching (post-teaching) the academic curriculum
- D. Strategies for pre-teaching and re-teaching (post-teaching) language needed for academics
- E. Strategies to integrate auditory speech language goals with curriculum
- F. Cognitive and academic assessments
- G. Process for developing individualized educational plans
- H. Collaborative strategies with school professionals

## **Domain 9. Emergent Literacy (The focus of this domain is on the development of the auditory and language skills that underlie and support the acquisition and advancement of literacy.)**

The learning sequence and pedagogy related to teaching the following skills in accordance with the child's level of language development:

- A. Reciting finger plays and nursery rhymes
- B. Telling or retelling stories
- C. Activity and story sequencing
- D. Singing songs and engaging in musical activities
- E. Creating experience stories/experience books
- F. Organization of books (e.g., cover, back, title, author page)
- G. Directionality and orientation of print
- H. Distinguishing letters, words, sentences, spaces and punctuation that mark text
- I. Phonics (e.g., sound-symbol correspondences and letter-sound correspondences)
- J. Phonemic awareness (e.g., sound matching, isolating, substituting, adding, blending, segmenting, deleting)
- K. Sight of word recognition

- L. Strategies for the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabulary
- M. Contextual clues to decode meaning
- N. Oral reading fluency development
- O. Text comprehension strategies (e.g., direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, application)
- P. Abstract and figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors)
- Q. Divergent question comprehension (e.g., inferential questions, predictions)

The AG Bell Academy has created an **AG BELL ACADEMY RECOMMENDED READING LIST FOR LSLS PROFESSIONALS SEEKING CERTIFICATION**. This list can be found on AG Bell’s website.

## THE LSLS ONLINE PRACTICE EXAM

The AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language offers an online practice exam\* designed to mirror the LSLS certification exam in style and question format as well as LSLS domain content.

This preparation tool will provide potential LSLS examinees the experience of taking multiple choice tests, and provide familiarity with the types of questions found on the LSLS exam. While the practice exam is designed around the concepts of the LSLS certification exam, it is not intended to gauge your understanding of the body of knowledge but rather provide you with the experience of taking this style of exam.

*\*Taking the LSLS practice exam will not provide the user with an indication of their overall preparedness for the real LSLS examination, nor does it guarantee better performance on the LSLS examination for those who take it.*

## GENERAL TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

The following suggestions are designed to help applicants prepare for the LSLS examination.

1. Each question on the test is in a four-option, multiple-choice format with one correct answer.
2. Read each question carefully.
3. The LSLS examination is timed. You will have four hours to complete it. If you are not sure of an answer, do not spend a great deal of time on it. It may be better to select the best answer or make a note of the question and come back to it later.
4. Find the response that best answers the question; there are no “trick questions” on the exam.
5. Answer every question. If you have time to check your answers, you will be able to do so on the online exam. The answers you select before you submit your test determine your final score. If you are unsure of an answer, it may be better to guess. You will not receive credit for any question left blank or marked with more than one answer.
6. Qualifying words, such as FIRST, MOST, LEAST and BEST are often critical in determining the correct answer.

### **How is a passing score determined?**

A passing score is determined on the number of items answered correctly on the 175 multiple choice questions on the exam. A passing score is in no way affected by the number of individuals who have taken the exam.

A “cut score” for passing the exam was established by having a group of subject matter experts in listening and spoken language examine a test form and rated the items according to how likely a candidate would be to answer the item correctly. The cut score was derived by aggregating those probabilities to establish an estimated expected score on the exam for a candidate who is qualified enough to pass.

Once the cut score was derived for one form by the LSLS subject matter expert committee, cut scores for other forms were derived by a process called “equating.” All exam forms were built to the same content and psychometric specifications; however, even minor variations in exam difficulty can mean that a number-correct score of, e.g., 65 on one exam form is not necessarily as easy to obtain as a number-correct score of 65 on a different exam form. Equating adjusts for these differences in difficulty to determine what level of performance on one form is equivalent to a specific level of performance on another form of the same examination, and therefore allows for fair decision-making by holding candidates to a common standard. **Each candidate’s performance is evaluated only in the context of the cut score, and is not compared to any other candidate’s performance.**

### **If I request re-scoring, would that allow me to see which questions I got right/wrong?**

No. The examination questions are confidential, and will not be included on any report to examinees.

### **If I don’t pass the exam, when may I take it again?**

Academy policy states that, “At least three months (90+ days) is required in between each test administration for an applicant/examinee who does not pass the exam. Individuals who do not pass the exam upon three administrations must meet additional certification requirements in order to be eligible to take the exam four or more times. The requirements can be found on the Academy’s website.

### **What is the Academy’s policy regarding exam deferrals?**

If an applicant has been accepted to take the exam, but cannot take the examination, they may request a deferral. Deferrals require a US\$50 processing fee. Exam professionals seeking certification may defer taking the examination for only one year.

### **Requests must be received in writing at least fourteen (14) days prior to your planned examination date.**

Should professionals seeking certification defer, the Academy will hold the application fee until the following year. If an exam professional seeking certification does not take the exam within the 12-month deferment period, they will forfeit their application fee. Professionals seeking certification who do not sit for the exam after the 12-month deferment period and wish to take the exam at a later date must submit a new application, including all fees and documentation required at the time of resubmission.

## What is the Academy's policy regarding exam cancellations?

The online examination facility allows the candidate to cancel and reschedule their testing session 72 hours or more prior to the scheduled exam date without financial penalty. Should the candidate cancel their scheduled exam date and/or time less than 72 hours prior to the scheduled time, a fee of approximately U.S. \$100 (or the current test proctor fee) will be charged. The candidate will not be able to move forward with a rescheduled time until that fee is paid.

*\*All Academy refunds will be processed in the form of a check directly to the applicant.*

## SCHEDULING THE EXAMINATION

Individual professionals who have been approved to take the examination will be contacted by the Academy with instructions on how to begin the test registration process. The LSL Certification Examination is administered on a secure web platform which is accessible at 700 test locations in 100 countries. A list of test centers is available here: <http://www.kryteriononline.com/Locate-Test-Center>.

### Fee for Taking the Examination

The fee for taking the examination is US \$395 for members of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and US \$495 for nonmembers. Payment is accepted in U.S. dollars only and can be made by check, money order, VISA, MasterCard or American Express. Checks should be made payable to the AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language. Applicants will be assessed a \$50 fee for bounced checks or declined credit cards.

### Late or Incomplete Application Policies

Professionals seeking certification must complete and submit all required documentation by the application deadline posted on the Academy's website. Inaccurate or incomplete applications will NOT be considered.

Applications received after an application deadline will not be considered until the following LSLS examination administration. The information that you provide on the application form and accompanying documents will be reviewed by the Academy's Certification Committee to determine eligibility to take the LSLS examination.

- The Academy does not confirm receipt of applications. If you would like to know whether or not your application was received, you may choose to send your application using a service that can confirm delivery; please do not require a signature upon delivery. The Academy does not accept any responsibility nor make exceptions for any delays that may occur due to delivery confirmation or a signature requirement.
- Late and incomplete applications will not be considered under any circumstances.
- Faxed applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- Applicants are encouraged to keep a photocopy of their application.
- Applications will not be returned for any reason.
- Please do not contact the Academy seeking an exception.

## ON EXAM DAY

Arrive at the test center no later than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled examination time. The exam proctor will meet with you just prior to the examination to conduct the “check-in” procedure. The “check-in” procedure information is provided to candidates once they have been approved to take the exam.

## EXAM ADMINISTRATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Special Accommodations

#### American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Examinees with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits a major life activity may be eligible for accommodation in the testing process to assure that the tests accurately reflect skills, knowledge and abilities. We are fully compliant with ADA guidelines and will provide reasonable accommodations. If you require special accommodations under the ADA, the request must be submitted in writing to the Academy with your completed LSLS application form. All requests for accommodations must describe the accommodation(s) being requested and include documentation, such as a physician’s note on official letterhead, supporting the special need. The Academy will work with the Kryterion test center location (selected by the candidate) to assure that they are prepared to meet that accommodation.

#### The Professional Code: The AG Bell Academy Principles of Professional Behavior and the AG Bell Academy Rules of Conduct

The Academy is dedicated to the purpose of promoting the delivery of comprehensive services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing through certification of professionals involved with enabling and assisting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and speak. Establishing the highest standards of professional integrity based on accepted ethical principles and practice is vital to the fulfillment of this purpose. The Professional Code comprises two separate parts: The Principles of Professional Behavior and the Rules of Conduct. Individuals are expected to adhere to provisions of both parts.

The Principles of Professional Behavior are aspirational and inspirational in nature and, while foundational to LSLS practice, are not actively enforced by the Academy. However, the Rules of Conduct shall be enforced by the Academy through its Ethics Committee, applying the AG Bell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language Statement of Practices and Procedures. Certain types of conduct may be contrary to both the Principles of Professional Behavior and the Rules of Conduct. That type of conduct is subject to review by the Ethics Committee pursuant to its procedures.

The Rules of Conduct apply to Academy certification holders who are responsible for the proper delivery of (re)habilitative services to such clients and their families. The Rules of Conduct also seeks to protect persons served and to ensure the integrity of recognized auditory-verbal and audiologic (re)habilitative practices as conducted by LSLS. The fundamentals of professional conduct are described in the Rules of Conduct as they relate to responsibility to persons served, to the public and to the professions engaged in the provision of auditory-verbal, educational and audiologic (re)habilitative services.

# AG BELL ACADEMY PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

## Principle I:

Individuals should honor their responsibility to make fully available to all children who are deaf or hard of hearing those aspects of auditory-verbal, educational and audiologic (re)habilitative practices that encourage habitual and maximal use of hearing technology, and are known to have positive effects upon the human auditory system and the subsequent development of verbal communication.

Examples:

- Individuals should support programs for the early detection and identification of hearing loss and the auditory management of infants, toddlers and children so identified.
- Individuals should seek to provide the earliest possible use of the most appropriate technology in order that their clients obtain the maximum auditory benefits possible.
- Individuals should seek to instruct primary caregivers in ways to provide optimal acoustic stimulation within meaningful contexts and support the development of the most favorable auditory learning environments for the acquisition of spoken language.
- Individuals should seek to integrate listening into the child's total personality.
- Individuals should view communication as a social act and seek to improve verbal (spoken) interaction within the typical social dyad of infant/child and primary care-giver(s), with the provision that one-to-one teaching is critical to communication development.
- Individuals should work to ensure that the child's emerging speech will be self-monitored through audition to the greatest possible extent.
- Individuals should strive to use natural sequential patterns of auditory, perceptual, linguistic and cognitive stimulation to encourage the emergence of listening, speech and language abilities.
- Individuals should make ongoing evaluation and prognosis of the development of listening skills an integral part of the (re)habilitative process.
- Assuming appropriate consent from a child's parent(s)/guardian(s), individuals should endeavor to mainstream/integrate children who are deaf or hard of hearing into regular education classes with appropriate support services to the fullest extent possible.
- Individuals are expected to adhere to principles established for their certifications.

## Principle II:

Individuals should honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons served in a professional capacity.

Examples:

- Individuals should maintain high standards of professional competence in rendering services.
- Individuals should provide professional services with honesty and compassion and should respect the dignity, worth and rights of those served.
- Individuals should use every resource, including referral when appropriate, to ensure that the highest quality service is provided.

- Individuals should not discriminate in the delivery of professional services on the basis of disability, race, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.
- Individuals should provide accurate information about the nature and management of hearing impairment and about the services and products offered.
- Individuals should evaluate the effectiveness of services rendered and of products dispensed. Individuals should provide services or dispense products only when the individual, in his/her professional judgment, believes that benefits can reasonably be expected.
- Individuals should maintain adequate records of professional services rendered and products dispensed.
- Individuals may make a statement of prognosis, but should not guarantee results, or otherwise mislead or misinform the client and/or families served.
- Individuals should recognize the right of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to select the type of (re)habilitative, communicative or educational system or program they wish for their child.
- Individuals shall charge only for services rendered. They shall not misrepresent, in any fashion, service rendered or products dispensed.

### **Principle III:**

Individuals should honor their responsibility to achieve and maintain the highest level of professional competence.

Examples:

- Individuals engaging in any aspect of the profession should perform within the scope of their competence, education, training and experience.
- Individuals should maintain professional competence, including participation in continuing education.
- Individuals should provide appropriate supervision and assume full responsibility for services delegated to their staff.
- Individuals should ensure that all equipment used in the provision of services is in proper working order and is properly calibrated.

### **Principle IV:**

Individuals should honor their responsibilities to the public by providing current and accurate information and education, and by developing appropriate services and referrals for unmet needs.

Examples:

- Individuals should not misrepresent their credentials, competence, education, training or experience.
- Individuals should not participate in professional activities that constitute a conflict of interest.
- Individuals should not misrepresent diagnostic information, services rendered, or products dispensed or engage in any scheme or artifice to defraud in connection with obtaining payment or reimbursement for such services or products.
- Individual statements to the public should strive to provide accurate and current information about the nature and management of hearing disorders and professional services.

## Principle V:

Individuals should honor their responsibilities to their own profession and maintain good relationships with Academy certified colleagues, members of allied professions, parents and students. Individuals should uphold the dignity and autonomy of the profession and maintain harmonious inter-professional and intra-professional relationships.

Examples:

- Individuals should inform colleagues and the public in a manner consistent with the highest professional standards about products and services they have developed.
- Individuals should assign credit to those who have contributed to a publication, presentation or product.
- Individuals should not use professional or commercial affiliations in any way that would mislead or limit services to persons served professionally.
- Individuals should provide professional services by exercising independent professional judgment, regardless of referral source or prescription.
- Individuals should not discriminate in their professional roles on the basis of disability, race, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

## AG BELL ACADEMY RULES OF CONDUCT

1. Individuals shall hold and maintain all licenses or certifications required by their jurisdiction. This includes participation in continuing education requirements, if mandated by the jurisdiction.
2. Individuals shall not reveal any professional or personal information about the person(s) served professionally unless required by law to do so.
3. Individuals shall not be convicted of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude that is related to the individuals' professional practice.
4. Individuals shall uphold their monetary commitments to the Academy. It shall be a violation of these Rules for an individual's certification fees to remain unpaid 60 days after becoming due.
5. Individuals shall not engage in any form of intentional misrepresentation in connection with their professional activities.
6. Individuals shall cooperate with the Academy's disciplinary action and other proceedings.
7. Individuals shall not engage in materially false or misleading practices in connection with their professional activities.
8. Individuals shall not commit any act or omission in the course of their professional dealings that demonstrates gross negligence or willful misconduct.

## AFTER THE EXAM

### EXAM RESULT NOTIFICATION

Exam results are typically available shortly following completion of the LSL online examination. Candidates receive these results via email. Pass results are indicated as such within that email. If you have failed the examination, an official score report will be included in that email. The score report is included as way to provide diagnostic information that gives feedback on your areas of strength and weakness for the various sections of the examination. Professionals seeking certification who do not pass their examination have the opportunity and are encouraged to retake the examination. Those professionals should contact the AG Bell Academy to arrange to re-take the examination.

In this case, at least three months (90+ days) must pass in between test administrations per Academy policy. Individuals who do not pass the exam upon three administrations must meet additional certification requirements in order to be eligible to take the exam four or more times. Those requirements can be found on the Academy's website.

### LSLS REGISTRY LISTINGS

The Academy's online LSLS Registry contains the names of currently certified LSLS. The LSLS Registry also indicates the certification designation(s) earned and their contact information, if made public. Parents and employers may reference the registry or contact the AG Bell Academy directly to verify that a person is listed as active and in good standing with the AG Bell Academy.

**LSLS are personally responsible for keeping contact information and name information current with the LSLS Registry.**

#### Changing Your Name

If your name changes after you have been certified as a LSLS, you must send written notification and legal documentation of the name change. Fill out the AG Bell Academy Service Request Form found on p. 39 of this handbook and attach a copy of your legal documentation. Acceptable forms of legal documentation include a copy of your marriage certificate, divorce decree or legal name change decree. Mail the completed form and documentation to the address listed on the form. There is no charge for updating your name with the LSLS Registry. However, there is a \$15 fee to receive a new certificate reflecting your name change.

#### Request for a Duplicate LSLS Certificate

To request a duplicate LSLS Certificate, complete the AG Bell Academy Service Request Form on p. 39 of this handbook. Fill out the form completely and submit it with the US\$15 fee to the address listed on the request form.

#### Request for a Duplicate Score Report

Duplicate official score reports are available upon request. Contact the Academy to make a request at [Academy@agbell.org](mailto:Academy@agbell.org).

## CERTIFICATION RENEWAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LSLS certification is valid for 24 months. It will expire two years from the last day of the month in which you were certified. For example, if you were certified on January 31, 2017, your certification will expire on January 31, 2019. You can view your recertification date on your LSLS certificate, or by accessing your online LSLS profile. Certified LSLS professionals are required to pay their renewal fee (US\$195) on a biennial basis and will receive a reminder notice at least 60 days before the due date of their renewal documentation. Timely electronic reminders are also contained in the Listening and Spoken Language Specialist e-newsletter. Documentation for continuing education hours must be submitted every two years. LSLS must earn a total of 15 Academy approved continuing education units during the two-year renewal period.

After the Academy receives payment of the renewal fee and documentation of required CEUs, a new LSLS certificate with the updated expiration date will be mailed. Applying for recertification early does not change the beginning or end dates of your next certification cycle. Activities attended during one recertification period cannot be carried over to the next certification period.

### Continuing Education Credits

All professionals seeking certification and certified LSLS professionals must attain Academy approved continuing education units (CEUs). Acceptable educational activities include:

- Attending Academy approved educational programs
- Development and/or presentation of an Academy approved program
- Publishing a peer-reviewed article
- Observation of certified LSLS professionals
- Mentoring a LSLS applicant (for certified LSLS professionals only)

The 15 mandatory continuing education hours for certified LSLS professionals must fall within the limits listed below and be approved by the Academy prior to submitting the application for certification renewal:

Continuing Education Activity Option	Minimum Required	Maximum Allowed
Attending Academy-approved educational programs	5 CEUs per renewal period	15 CEUs per renewal period
Development and/or presentation of an Academy-approved program		5 CEUs per renewal period
Publishing a peer-reviewed article		5 CEUs per renewal period
Structured observation of certified LSLS professionals - must be accompanied by a copy of the appropriate application attachment for each of the 10 hours of observation		2 CEUs per renewal period
Service on a board of committee in a LSLS related organization		2 CEUs per renewal period
Mentoring an LSLS applicant (must be accompanied by a Mentor's Evaluation Form from the LSLS applications)		5 CEUs per renewal period

## Reinstatement of Lapsed Certification

To ensure that a LSLS certified professional has maintained the body of knowledge comprised in the nine LSLS domains of knowledge, individuals with a lapsed certification status may follow the procedure below to reinstate their LSLS certification:

- Within 60 days of the lapse date, certification may be reinstated provided the LSLS submits documentation for 15 CEUs earned within the recertification period and a fee of \$100 USD in addition to the \$195 USD recertification fee.
- Within 90 days of the lapse date, certification may be reinstated provided the LSLS submits documentation for 15 CEUs plus an additional 3 CEUs (total of 18) earned within the recertification plus 90 days period and a fee of \$200 USD in addition to the \$195 USD recertification fee.
- Any LSLS's appeal for recertification made to the Academy after this 90-day grace period must re-take and pass the LSLS examination, and pay the current exam/application fees to do so.
- Professionals with lapsed certification will have up to two calendar years from their lapse date to re-take and pass the examination to reinstate their certification.
- After two years, a lapsed individual must reapply for the LSLS examination under the requirements outlined in the current LSLS application materials.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered by the Academy's Certification Committee only for individuals who submit a written request (at least 15 days prior to their lapse date) for an extended recertification deadline due to:

- o Medical disability
- o Active military deployment
- o Retired status request
- o Extension for an extenuating circumstance.\*

*\*Requests for an extended recertification deadline because courtesy reminders were not received will not be considered an "extenuating circumstance," and will not be considered by the Academy's certification committee.*

## Retirement Information

Individuals holding LSLS certification who wish to retire from practice have the option of changing their certification status to "retired" by submitting a letter requesting retirement status to the Academy.

Upon approval by the AG Bell Academy's Certification Committee, a certificate indicating "retired" status will be issued. Retired individuals may continue to use the appropriate initials after their name as usual. Should a retired individual return to practice, certification must be reinstated in accordance with the Academy's lapsed certification policy. The "retired" status will not expire with time.

## CERTIFICATION AND SERVICE FEES

Service	AG Bell Members	AG Bell Non-members
Application and Certification Fee	\$395	\$495
Retesting (second & third attempt)	\$250	\$350
Duplicate Certificate	\$15	\$15
Preliminary Review of Academic Background	\$40	\$40
CE credits for an individual educational activity	\$35	\$35
Bounced checks and declined credit cards	\$50	\$50
LSLS Re-Certification Fee (payable every two years)	\$195	\$195
The LSLS Practice Exam	\$50	\$50

