

Statement to clarify issues of additional education and training in the area of vestibular assessment and rehabilitation therapy.

The Shout Newsletter of the Professional Board for Speech, Language and Hearing Professions (April 2006) informed registered speech-language therapists and audiologists of the decision that Vestibular Assessment and Rehabilitation was one of the areas in which additional education and training was required as it had not been covered by all training institutions offering undergraduate courses in Audiology. The decision was made after consultation with members of the profession. Such a decision requires that post-graduate or additional training and education would have to be undertaken prior to practitioners being able to render a service to patients who required vestibular assessment and rehabilitation therapy. Further, the HPCSA ruled that only universities would be allowed to offer such training as it would be subject to evaluation during the HPCSA's accreditation process of the university. Each university wishing to offer additional education and training is required to submit a detailed curriculum (with objectives, teaching and learning methodology, and assessments that will form the basis for deciding whether a practitioner is competent in the particular area,) to the Education committee of the Board for accreditation before the course may be offered. Details were given of the steps required should individuals wish to be recognised as either trainers in such courses; or clinicians working in the area. Clinicians were offered a choice of either completing an accredited training programme or to apply for their CV to be reviewed.

Prompted by the South African Universities currently offering education and training in profession-specific disciplines (i.e. Audiology only, rather than Speech Therapy AND Audiology) the HPCSA has more recently resolved that in future, (as described in the revised regulations to be promulgated in 2009) audiology graduates from university programmes will be educated and trained in vestibular assessment and rehabilitation therapy. Thus, the situation for practitioners currently in practice (i.e. those who have already graduated) remains the same as outlined above. It is imperative that all practitioners who work in vestibular assessment and rehabilitation are trained for this area of practice. Practitioners are reminded of the ethical requirements that they only engage in areas within their scope of practice and for which they have adequate education, training, and experience.