
**HEARING AID COUNCIL
OBJECTIVE STRUCTURED PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS
INFORMATION & GUIDANCE TO YOU – revised 28th Jan 2008**

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Hearing Aid Council's Practical Examinations** are known as **OSPEs** (***Objective Structured Practical Examinations***). They are designed to test your practical competencies in 10 separate areas.

As with the written examinations, you must check in your personal luggage (including mobile phones etc) and no equipment will be allowed in the examination rooms except that provided by the HAC.

After we book you in and do our security check, you and the other candidates for that session (you can be tested with up to 14 other candidates) will go to the Welcome Area and wait for instructions from the invigilators. You will be given a brief introduction to the session, told the layout of the examination rooms, location of the toilets and the emergency procedures. You will be provided with a sheet of self-adhesive labels with your candidate number on each label. We will give you a sheet showing the OSPE station you will start at and the order you will work through the rest of the OSPE stations in the examination. This will be explained in more detail later.

There will be a total of **15 stations**. At the **10 active examination stations** you will be asked to perform a variety of tasks.

**7 stations will be staffed by an examiner who will assist you
and guide the practical
3 stations will be supervised by an invigilator**

There will be

**2 x 10 mins stations covering medical aspects
2 x 10 mins stations covering pure tone audiometry
3 x 10 mins stations covering aural impressions
3 x 10 mins stations covering hearing aid tech/rehabilitation**

There will also be **5 x 10 mins rest stations**.

In **Rest Station 8** you will be acting as a client and allowing another candidate to look in your ear, perform otoscopy and place an otostop / otoblock in preparation for an impression. However, an impression will NOT be taken.

Note: If you rather not undergo the above procedure you must inform the HAC as soon as possible. It would be helpful if you could arrange to have your own ears examined beforehand to ensure that they are in a suitable condition for otoscopy and otoblock insertion.

For all the other rest stations / periods you will return to the rest area. Remember that you are still under examination conditions while in the rest area.

The style of examination at the 10 active stations will vary. Some will be staffed by an examiner who will interact with you and direct the practical. Others will be supervised by an invigilator but the invigilator will not interact with you unless there is a problem with the equipment or some other unforeseen event.

At each of the unstaffed active stations (i.e., **Stations 2, 12 & 13**) there will be a supply of blank answer sheets for that station. At each of the staffed stations (i.e., **Stations 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 11**) the examiner will be using an assessment sheet for that station. You **must** remember to put one of your personalised self-adhesive labels on to each answer sheet or assessment sheet before you start that station. If you spoil an answer sheet then you must mark it clearly as **NOT TO BE MARKED** and put it into the answer box for that station or hand it to an examiner. You should **not** remove any answer sheets from the room.

You will hear a series of loud beeps (or optional vibratory signal if required) to start the examination. The same signal will indicate the end of each 10 minute practical session. You must label your answer sheet (and any other material relevant to the answer sheet) before starting a particular station. When you finish, or hear the change station signal, you **must** ensure you have labelled your answer sheet and placed it in the sealed **answer sheet box** for that station. The answer sheet boxes are clearly labelled and scripts cannot be retrieved from these boxes.

When you hear the change signal you must move promptly to the next OSPE station and wait for the signal to start that station. You can read any appropriate instructions at a station while you wait for the start signal.

After you complete your final OSPE station you should return to the Welcome Area and wait for further instructions from the invigilators.

2. LAYOUT & ORDER OF OSPE STATIONS

You have **10 minutes** to complete each station. At the end of each 10 minute session a bleeper will sound and you must move to the next station.

You will be given an individual plan to show which station to start at and the order you should complete the stations in.

The minimum time to complete the 15 stations is 2 hours and 30 minutes. Often the examination takes longer if extra time is needed because of technical hitches and changeover delays. You will not be permitted to leave the examination process for any reason unless allowed by the invigilator or, in the case of an emergency, by centre staff.

The order of the practical stations is shown in Fig 1.

The content of each station is described in a later section

Answer sheets will be at all **unstaffed** stations (Stations 2, 12 and 13). You **must leave your answer sheet in the labelled boxes at each station**. You must remember to put your candidate number on every answer sheet before you start that station. If you do not leave your answer sheet in the labelled box then you will **fail** that station.

For each of the 10 examined stations you can score either a Pass or a Fail.

If you pass all 10 stations you will pass the practical examination. If you fail any stations then you can resit those stations during the resit OSPEs of this exam cycle. If you do not pass those stations at the resit then you must attempt all 10 stations during the next new exam cycle.

You should be aware that **2008 (2) will be the final HAC exams** and there will not be another opportunity to sit the exams after that cycle.

Fig 1. Order of OSPE stations

- 1. History Taking and Decision Making.**
- 2, Medical Aspects with Slideshow**
- Rest Station**
- 5. NOAH and Hearing Aid Fitting**
- 6. NOAH and Fine Tuning**
- 7. Otoscopy and Otoblock Placement**
- 8. Rest Station + ear for 7**
- 9. Impression Taking and Impressions.**
- Rest Station**
- 10. Pure Tone Audiometry without Masking**
- 11. Pure Tone Audiometry with Masking**
- Rest Station**
- 12. Retubing and Earmoulds**
- 13. Hearing Aid Technology and Fault Finding.**
- Rest Station**

3. CONTENTS OF THE 10 OSPE STATIONS

Station 1. History Taking and Decision Making (with examiner).

Display stand with instructions.
Table & clock
Chairs
Clipboards
Pads of A4 paper

You will be given brief written information about a client. You have eight minutes to take a full relevant history from the examiner who will be acting as a client throughout. There will be a notepad and pen available.

At the end of 8 minutes you need to inform the examiner whether or not the client should be referred to a doctor and, if so, for what reasons.

Station 2. Medical Aspects with Slide Show

Display stand with instructions
Table
Chair
1 x TV & DVD

Candidates will use a DVD player to look at 6 slides on Medical Aspects. Each slide lasts 90 seconds and there will be multiple-choice questions on each slide. **This station has negative marking.** A correct answer scores 1 mark, an incorrect answer scores -1 and a "Don't Know" answer scores 0.

Rest Station

You can rest for 10 minutes.

Station 5. NOAH and Hearing Aid Fitting (with examiner).

Large rectangular table

2 x chairs

1 x Laptop (DELL LATTITUDE D610) + wheelmouse + Windows XP

NOAH Version 3.1.2

1 x HI-PRO with current firmware

2 of each type of hearing aid & programming leads.

The following is the hearing aid model and software list for Stations 5 and 6:-

Manufacturer	Software version	BTE Hearing Aid Model	Changes since 2007(1)/(2) OSPEs
GN ReSound	Aventa 2.4	Plus 5 (RP60-DI)	Software upgrade & new hearing aid model
Phonak	iPFG 1.7a	Eleva 211 dAZ	Software upgrade & new hearing aid model
Oticon	Genie 2007.1	Tego	Software upgrade
Siemens	Connexx 5.4	Cielo 2	Software upgrade & new hearing aid model
Starkey	Inspire 2.0	Destiny 800	Software upgrade & new hearing aid model
Widex	Compass 4.3.1	AIKIA AK9	Software upgrade & new hearing aid model

Using the provided laptop, you will have to use NOAH 3 to find a client specified by the examiner and enter audiometric data. You will then program your chosen hearing aid using appropriate cables and a HI-PRO box and finally save the data correctly. All equipment will be provided.

Station 6. NOAH and Hearing Aid Fine Tuning (with examiner).

Equipment as in previous station.

You will be given various scenarios that might happen at a **follow up appointment** and you will be asked to perform specific trouble shooting actions with the previously chosen hearing aid.

When the signal to start is given, you will have to retrieve previous programming data, fine tune your chosen hearing aid following comments from the client and save the data correctly.

Station 7. Otoscopy and Otoplast Placement

- Display stand with instructions
- Table
- 3 x chairs
- Scissors
- Sterets
- Otoscope (Heine Minilux) and specula
- Otolight
- Small, medium and large sponge otoplasts
- 3 sizes of Cotton Blocks
- Bite blocks
- Hand Wipes & Tissues
- Waste Bin

This will assess your ability to perform otoscopy and otoplast insertion safely on a real ear and in accordance with good practice. All equipment will be provided, and you should be prepared to perform an open-jaw technique.

You will have to inspect another candidate's ear (who is at the station 8 rest station in the same room) and report findings to the examiner. You will then have to place an otoplast in preparation for an impression but you will **not** take an impression. The subject should be instructed as in real life.

Station 8. Rest station in same area as Station 7.

- Table
- Chair
- Display stand with instructions/preparation for **Station 9**.

You will be at the rest station offering an ear for use by the candidate at station 7 who will carry out otoscopy and otoplast insertion.

Note: If you rather not undergo the above procedure you must inform the HAC as soon as possible. It would be helpful if you would arrange to have your own ears examined beforehand to ensure that they are in a suitable condition for otoscopy and otoplast insertion during Station 7.

Station 9. Impression Taking and Impressions.

Display stand with instructions

Table

2 x chairs

1 x replica ear mounted in replica head on stand

Supply of DETAX Flextime and Starkey Precise 3SR.

Impression syringes

4 x Ready made impressions to be supplied by examiners.

You will take an impression on a replica ear, **in accordance with good practice as if on a real client**. You are not required to **talk** to the head with the replica ear. You will have to mix addition silicone impression material and syringe this into a replica ear mounted on a stand. All equipment will be provided. You will be able to choose between two addition silicon impression materials, both of which are fast-acting.

While waiting for the material to set, you will have to recognise and identify features and faults on 4 supplied ear impressions and answer some multiple-choice questions on those impressions.

Rest Station.

You can rest for 10 minutes.

Station 10. Pure Tone Audiometry without Masking

Examiner present.
2 x large rectangular tables.
Chairs
Kamplex (KLD series) audiometer + accessories
Aurical audiometer + accessories
Laptop (DELL LATITUDE D610) + wheelmouse
Aurical audiometer software version 2.33

There will be two audiometers in the room. You will be given the option to carry out pure tone audiometry on a clinical Kamplex or an Aurical audiometer. You may assume that a medical case history has been taken; daily checks of the audiometer and otoscopy have been performed so you do **NOT** need to carry these out.

The examiner, acting as client, will state which is the better ear, if tinnitus is present and whether exposed to noise within the last 24 hours.

You **will** have to give pre-test instructions to the client.

You are required to carry out pure tone audiometry without masking for air-conduction and bone-conduction in accordance with current BSA recommended procedures. The examiner will act as a client and will allocate the frequencies that require testing, since the allotted time will not permit the testing of all frequencies. You should test and plot these specified frequencies on the audiogram provided, as you would in clinical practice.

You should leave equipment in a ready state for the next candidate.

Station 11. Pure Tone Audiometry with Masking.

Examiner present
Equipment is the same as in station 10.

The examiner will give you an audiogram showing the not-masked thresholds for bone conduction and both right and left air conduction. You should take time to go through the rules of masking and inform the examiner which should be applied and the relevant frequencies.

The examiner will specify a particular rule for testing if more than one rule is present in the audiogram example. You should then plot the **1 kHz only** not-masked thresholds, both AC and BC, on the blank audiogram provided.

You should carry out pure tone audiometry with masking in accordance with BSA recommended procedures, using the masking chart provided.

You should leave equipment in a ready state for the next candidate.

Rest Station.

You can rest for 10 minutes.

Station 12. Retubing and Earmoulds

Display stand with instructions
Table & chair
Scissors
Pliers
Reamer / tubing remover
Magnifying glass
Task lighting / desk lamp
Plastic bag containing threader, standard earmould and standard tubing.
4 x ready made earmoulds - clearly labelled.

You will have to retube a typical earmould for a BTE hearing aid. Therefore, **one** standard earmould, **one** piece of standard tubing and one threader will be provided in an individual plastic bag for each candidate. You should bag and label the retubed mould for marking by an examiner when the exam is over. You will also have to recognise and identify the features of 4 ear moulds provided and answer some multiple-choice questions about them

Station 13. Hearing Aid Technology and Fault Finding.

2 Display stands with different instructions in each.
2 Tables
2 Chairs
Magnifying glass
Task lighting / desk lamp
Selection of hearing aids clearly labelled.

This station is in **one** parts and there are separate instructions in display stands for Part 1 and Part 2.

In Part 1, you will have to identify the model type and certain features of one hearing aid system.

In Part 2, you will have to identify common faults with hearing aid systems from a selection of three supplied hearing aid systems and, in addition, you will have to state the usual adverse effects of the identified faults on hearing aid performance.

Rest Station

You can rest for ten minutes.