

HLAA Learning Programs

**AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF
HEARING LOSS SUPPORT SPECIALISTS™**

Building Knowledge to Better Serve People with Hearing Loss

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Administered by the Hearing Loss Association of America

www.hearingloss.org

American Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists™

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Academy students, please take a few minutes to read this FAQ and become familiar with the kinds of questions it answers. Please keep this as a resource to reflect upon in the future if you have any questions before contacting the Academy, answers can be found here quickly and in available in the course site for easy access.

I'm confused. What is the relationship between the Hearing Loss Association of America, SHHH, and the Academy? The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the nation's largest nonprofit consumer advocacy association for people with hearing loss. Founded in 1979 by Howard E. "Rocky" Stone, its mission is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, advocacy and support. HLA was formerly named "Self Help for Hard of Hearing People" or SHHH. The new name was adopted in November 2005.

The American Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists™ (the Academy) is a program administered by HLAA. Experts on the staff of HLAA developed and created the Academy, with support from the Academy Advisory Board and other expert volunteers.

What's the difference between Academy Classes and Lessons. There are 4 main Classes in the certificate program and each Class consists of 10-15 Lessons.

Why does each Lesson include more than one document? Each Lesson consists of at least 2 (and sometimes 10 or more) documents. These include: an Introduction or lesson overview, the Required Readings, and Suggested Readings (and links). By the time you complete the Academy program, you will have read about 200 articles!

Who created all the readings? Many authors – from credentialed experts to individuals with hearing loss. The readings are a mix of articles published in magazines such as *Hearing Loss* and *Hearing Health*, the six books and DVD that are part of the Academy program, online links, and original articles developed specifically for the Academy by experts in hearing loss. Many different individuals, organizations and publications generously gave us permission to use these materials to build public knowledge about hearing loss.

Some of the readings are from the 1990s. Isn't that material too dated? We don't believe it is. In fact, we include some readings from the 1980s. We chose what we believe to be the best articles available on each given topic. Sometimes nothing has been written that advances the discussion since then, sometimes we believe that the original article is simply the best. If you have a different article to suggest, just email academy@hearingloss.org and we will certainly consider using it.

Does the Academy (or the Hearing Loss Association of America) endorse the content of all the readings? The Academy endorses the idea that hearing loss support specialists should understand all the important aspects of controversial issues related to hearing loss. When the Academy or HLAA has a strong philosophical stance on an issue, we will make it clear in the Lesson Introduction. But we have chosen to include Required Readings that present different points of view when we believe that those views have merit

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for many people. Using an article for the Academy does not imply “endorsement” by HLAA, and we want you to be empowered to make an informed decision about a given issue for yourself.

Is Blackboard the best software program for the Academy? We believe it is. Blackboard is the single most popular and widely used online learning program in the U.S., accessed by millions of students every day. If you haven’t experienced online learning before, you may initially find it a bit confusing. But once you get used to it, we think you’ll like it – and you’ll be well prepared for future online classes! If you feel frustrated initially, remember that Blackboard is well-known for being user-friendly. You just need to give yourself time to get used to online learning.

I don’t like reading online. Can I print the material and read it in hardcopy? Yes. Some people find it difficult to read on a computer screen. If it is easier for you to read in hardcopy, then feel free to download the files and print them.

Can I order a printed version of the Academy learning program? No. The Academy is specifically designed to be an online learning program, and it is offered in electronic form only. An online course is in a sense “live.” Just as with a professor’s lecture, the content can be updated as needed and immediately as new information is learned throughout the year. The Academy is dedicated to providing you with the most current and accurate information available.

How will I know if material has been updated? We anticipate that most of the changes will be minor, and if so we will not announce them. Any significant changes in content or structure will be announced on the Announcements page. A big change may be announced via an email to all students currently enrolled.

What if you make a change that affects the final exam? Such a change will be infrequent. When it happens we will announce the change clearly.

I’ve seen typos and incomplete sentences. Should I notify the Academy Team? You can include that information in the Evaluation Form or send an email to academy@hearingloss.org. However, please be aware that we can only edit articles that were written for the Academy – if the article has been written by another organization and previously published elsewhere, we cannot make changes to the material.

SELECTED TOPICS FROM THE FAQ FOR POTENTIAL STUDENTS

Posted at www.hearingloss.org/academy

Is online learning for everyone? No. Not everyone is suited to online learning. Online courses may seem more difficult to those who are not adequately prepared for the technological and distance aspects of such coursework. The following information is designed to assist you in determining if online coursework is for you.

What type of adult learners take online courses? Online courses have been found to be a particularly valuable option for the following types of learners:

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- Busy professionals who may value the flexibility and ability to schedule the time they devote to an online course.
- Disciplined and self-directed learners who are willing to set aside the time it takes to complete coursework online.
- Learners who are comfortable writing and sharing ideas in text with the course participants.
- Learners who are familiar with electronic communication, downloading plug-ins and attaching documents to an e-mail.
- Learners who are not afraid to ask for assistance.

How do I know if online learning is for me? Students who are successful in online courses are generally strong readers, budget their time well, and enjoy learning by reading and reviewing text or graphic representation of information. They enjoy working independently, look forward to using technology to communicate with others, and have good writing and typing skills. Successful online students have the required hardware and software readily available to them.

How much time will it take to complete the Academy program? It is estimated that it will take students 50-70 hours to complete the program (about 10-15 hours per learning class, with 4 classes), including all required readings and the final exam.

Will there be tests? Yes. There will be a non-graded quiz at the end of each of the four classes, and there will be a graded exam at the end of the entire program. The exam will take not more than two hours, and you must complete the exam in the time allotted. The content will be largely drawn from the four practice quizzes. In order to receive the Certificate in Hearing Loss Support, you must pass the final exam.

How will I know whether I have passed the final exam? Exam results (pass/fail) will be available immediately via blackboard. Your Certificate in Hearing Loss Support (suitable for framing), will be mailed within one month to all those who pass.

What will I earn when I graduate from the Academy? Your most important benefit will be substantially increased and more accurate knowledge and understanding about hearing loss. You will have learned about many of the resources available to people with hearing loss. Upon passing the final exam, you will receive your Certificate in Hearing Loss Support in the mail, and you will become a member of the Academy for a period of three years. In three years, in order to remain a member of the Academy, you will need to complete an exam to show that your knowledge remains accurate and current, and/or complete a CEU requirement.

What does the Certificate in Hearing Loss Support qualify me for?

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The **Certificate in Hearing Loss Support** is a certificate rather than a “credential,” because the Academy is not a credentialing or licensing body. The Certificate is simply intended to indicate that a learning program has been successfully completed. The Academy learning program is intended to build knowledge to help participants better serve people with hearing loss in their professional or volunteer capacity. But unlike a 2- or 4-year degree from an accredited learning institution such as a college or university, the Certificate does not formally *qualify* the graduate to work with people with hearing loss.

Is there a required timeline for the program? Yes. Admission is rolling (students can start at any point in the year) and students can take up to a year from the date of admission to complete the program – including passing the final exam. Students must complete the program within one year.

Do I need a textbook for the Academy program? There is no “textbook” for the Academy. Most of the reading materials have been developed specifically for this program, or have been taken from consumer periodicals. In addition, there are a few books and in time one DVD included in the program enrollment fee that will be sent to you when you have been accepted to the program. Readings in these texts are assigned as part of the program.

Do I need a special email address? Presently, all you need is a valid, active, and accessible email account. We ask that you consider obtaining this account through your ISP (Internet Service Provider). If you prefer using one of the free services available online (Yahoo, MSN, Hotmail, etc.), please set up an account that you will use only for online learning and that has a clear, simple, and short address.

Is there an “instructor” for the Academy program? No, while the course is moderated and overseen by the Hearing Loss Association of America, there is not a requirement to have an instructor. HLAA staff is monitoring the Academy on an on-going basis. If you have questions about an aspect of the Academy curriculum, email academy@hearingloss.org and a staff member will respond to your email within 3 business days.

What if I decide to withdraw from the Academy program? Can I get a refund? Participants can withdraw from the Academy program at any time. If you withdraw from the program within 2 weeks of the date of admission, you will receive a 50% refund. If you withdraw from the program within 1 month of the date of admission, you will receive get a 25% refund, after one month, there is no refund. Participants must complete the program within one (1) year of admission, if you do not complete the program you will need to re-apply and pay full tuition.

Technical Questions – Most Frequently asked Technical Questions

I just registered to the academy; can I access the materials immediately? Once we receive your registration materials we will send you a confirmation letter to the email you provided with us. After this you will receive your course books and password information in the mail to log onto the blackboard site. Please keep you username and password in a safe and secure place so that you can refer to it if necessary at a later time.

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How do I access the blackboard course site? You can access the blackboard course site by going to www.hearingloss.org and click on the Academy section on the side panel. Once there you have accessed the academy web page on the SHHH webpage. You must login into the course site in order to access the materials. From the student login you will be linked directly to blackboard course site where you are required to login with your assigned login name and password.

I don't remember my password or the system does not recognize my username. Blackboard allows users to submit information that will allow ONLY you to receive a new password to the email that you submitted with your academy registration form. Only the user can change their password once it is assigned, **DO NOT CONTACT THE ACADEMY TEAM TO CHANGE YOUR PASSWORD**, Blackboard does not allow the Academy team to change your password for your security. Follow the instructions provided on the "forgot my password" link under the login section on Blackboard to obtain a new password.

I don't see the course, where do I find the course and course materials? Once you have logged into the Blackboard site you will see a panel identifying which course you are enrolled in, please select the Academy of Hearing Loss Support Specialists to see the course content. Once you have selected the course you will see columns on the side that clearly direct you to the announcement page, classes, tools, and other important information and content of the class.

How do I access the discussion board? I can not enter the discussion because I do not have java. Below is the step by step instructions to enter the discussion board and to download the Java plug-in.

1. In Discussion Board, you will see more options: please select "**Collaboration.**"
2. You will now see Sessions which are available for you to access. If there are none listed it is because there are none available at that time. If there is a Session open please select the "**join**" option.
3. If you have the Java-Plug-in you will automatically enter into the chat browser; if not, you will need to select the "**download the Java Plug-in.**"
4. If you need to download the Java Plug-in, simply follow the instructions for the system you have: "Windows Users," "Macintosh OS X Users," or "Macintosh OS 8 and 9 Users." (The Blackboard instructions are very clear and have been used by thousands of students.)
5. Once you complete downloading the Java Plug-in you will need to restart your computer and then follow steps 1-7 again to enter the chat room.

I try printing a document and the paper comes out blank. If this happens you should try saving the document to your hard drive and then open it and print it directly from adobe.

I change my email address. If you change your email address, please change it in the Tools section of blackboard under the Personal Information section, this will allow the Academy team to contact you at this email.

I received an email from HLAAs asking me my personal information or telling me to open the attachment. HLAAs will never ask you for personal information to access your

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account, nor would we send any attachments in any email. You will be contacted by two email addresses in the academy; academy@hearingloss.org or academytech@hearingloss.org.