Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Scope of Practice

(Note: All underlined terms in this document are defined in the Glossary.)

A Certified Audio Description Specialist (“CAUDES”) is an ACVREP-certified professional who crafts Audio Description language and/or provides quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language. A CAUDES is trained and skilled at creating vivid descriptions of key visual elements for people who are blind or have low vision, as well as others who benefit from this Audio Description. A CAUDES can be blind, sighted, or have low vision. This certification does not include those who solely voice Audio Description, or engineers/editors who mix Audio Description soundtracks.

The primary audience for a CAUDES’ work are individuals who are blind or have low vision. Audio Description benefits such individuals by expanding inclusivity, enabling them to understand and experience important visual information independently, and providing access that is on a par with their sighted peers.

A CAUDES’ work may also benefit individuals who are deafblind or have other sensory disabilities, people who have cognitive or intellectual disabilities, those who are auditory learners or language learners, individuals who are neurodivergent, and those who wish to listen to the description while using their vision to perform another task.

A CAUDES creates Audio Description across a wide range of visual experiences, including, but not limited to:

* Live performances or events including theater, operas, dance, lectures, classes, meetings, training sessions, conferences, concerts, tours, parades, theme parks, sports, and community-based events
* Works of art, including painting, sculpture, photography, etc.
* Installations, and exhibits including museums, galleries, welcome or visitor centers, and indoor or outdoor displays
* Prerecorded or live media, including film or theatrical releases, movie trailers, television broadcasts, streaming services, DVDs, educational or training videos, 3-D imagery, virtual reality, or any other pre-recorded digital media such as interactive kiosks, touchscreens, and video games.
* Outdoor attractions including national/state/local parks, festivals, and fairs
* Internet-based content, web-based imagery and videos, as well as online courses
* Graphic novels and picture books.
* Content included in social media, and other existing and emerging technologies
* Area description, including layout, size, orientation, and visual inventories of public or educational facilities, and entertainment, cultural, and sports venues
* Indoor or outdoor spaces, such as hiking trails, parade routes, cruise ships, walking tours

A CAUDES works in collaboration with a variety of professionals and stakeholders including, but not limited to:

* Knowledgeable Audio Description Consultants, including those who are blind or have low vision
* Patrons who are blind or have low vision
* Sighted assistants skilled at providing information about key visual elements
* Participants in Audio Description focus groups
* Accessibility specialists and consultants including architects, exhibit and tour designers or developers, and orientation and mobility specialists, sign language or tactile interpreters, or interveners
* App or website developers, game developers, and equipment designers
* Digital asset managers and content specialists
* Individuals who voice description such as professional and semi-professional voice talents, and volunteers
* Production company personnel such as media producers, and directors
* Museum staff and consultants such as archivists, curators, docents, and access coordinators
* Theater personnel and consultants such as front and back of house staff and volunteers, technicians, stage managers, and directors
* Captioners, choreographers, costume designers, dialect coaches, dramaturgs, fight directors, graphics designers, intimacy directors, light designers, movement specialists, physical theatre instructors, production managers, props designers, scenic and set designers, scenographers, stage combat coordinators, and sub/sur-titlers
* Patron services, marketing, and communications staff
* Federal/state/tribal/provincial/local governmental personnel, as well as staff at parks, historical sites, and visitor centers
* Educators, subject matter experts, educational resource providers, access coordinators, and college/university personnel who work with students with disabilities
* Content creators who incorporate Audio Description into performances

A CAUDES may be directly employed by any organization or entity that provides Audio Description, or they may work as an independent contractor.

A CAUDES strives to use objective language to vividly describe key visual elements that are aligned with the work or content. They familiarize themselves with the content before preparing the description and research any additional information that may be needed to understand the work and provide greater clarity to the description.

A CAUDES may provide description by writing a script that they or another may voice.

A CAUDES may live-voice description without a prepared script, as appropriate to the circumstances of the event.

A CAUDES strives to prepare concise description that accurately reflects and supports the visual experience.

A CAUDES may edit or engage in quality control of Audio Description writing and production.

A CAUDES’ responsibility is to balance the needs and preferences of the patron with the intent of the content creator and the expectations of the producer/client within a best practices framework. A CAUDES recognizes that content creators may want decision- making authority over, or to collaborate on, the accompanying Audio Description.

A CAUDES may be called upon to consult with content creators on the integration of their own Audio Description into the content.

A CAUDES breaks down the visual elements to be described into two categories:

1. Priority description – elements that must be included
2. Supplemental description – elements that would be beneficial to include

In media and live performance practice, a CAUDES strives to fit the description into the pauses between the spoken or sung dialogue and critical sound elements. A list of visual elements to describe includes, but is not limited to:

* Actions
* Facial expressions
* Physical characteristics
* Body language and gestures
* Visual comedy and sight gags
* Dance movements
* Costumes or clothing
* Multi-media effects and lighting
* Settings and scene changes
* Props, including signage
* Character descriptions
* Text or on-screen graphics including titles, credits, and subtitled translations of a foreign language for the target language of the audience

A CAUDES may also employ other techniques, including but not limited to Enhanced, Integrated, and Extended Audio Description.

In museum, gallery, or tour practice, a CAUDES works to strike a balance between the expectations of the client, information provided from subject matter experts (e.g.,

staff curators or docents), the needs of the intended audiences, and the overall length and/or time limit of the description.

A CAUDES who works with and in museums, visitor centers, theme parks, etc., must be familiar with best practices for describing static displays as well as interactive elements requiring directions for effective and safe use. These displays include but are not limited to:

* Artifacts, art, images, and text
* Digital interactives, such as touchscreen and/or tablet displays, and kiosks
* Tactile displays, such as models, maps, and physical interactives
* Videos embedded in exhibits
* Instructions for using tour players or other apps required for accessing the Audio Description

A CAUDES who works with or within these facilities or venues must also be familiar with multiple facets of accessibility, general safety, and related wayfinding or navigational needs.

A CAUDES must be familiar with a given facility's or venue’s operations, practices, and public policies as they may impact Audio Description design and implementation.

When possible, a CAUDES involves Audio Description patrons in the design and development of Audio Description language, and encourages the collection and use of patron feedback.

In training or education, a CAUDES works in consultation with subject matter experts, as well as instructors or trainers, to understand which information is vital for a student to master. They research terminology and its relationship to the content, focusing on the embedded visual elements in the lesson, which may include but are not limited to:

* Pictures and videos
* Symbols, drawings, and icons
* Text, captions, or subtitles
* Charts or tables
* Graphs or diagrams
* Names or titles
* Mathematical representations such as symbols, equations, and formulas

In these and all other areas of practice, a CAUDES analyzes the visual content, prioritizes the important visual elements, and crafts language to describe those elements to enhance the listener’s understanding and experience of the content.

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Body of Knowledge

(Note: All underlined terms in this document are defined in the Glossary.)

### Information about individuals who use Audio Description

A CAUDES must know and understand the following:

* 1. The degrees of legal blindness or low vision
     1. Congenital
     2. Adventitious/acquired
     3. Degree of light perception
     4. Color perception
     5. Field of vision
     6. Acuity
  2. The impact of Audio Description on other audiences
     1. General public
     2. Companions (friend, family member, spouse) who provide Audio Description
     3. Second language learners
     4. Individuals who are deafblind and tactile or Protactile sign interpreters
     5. Individuals with other disabilities, including but not limited to:
        + People who are neurodiverse
        + People who have learning or intellectual disabilities
        + People who have multiple disabilities
  3. How to interact with people who use Audio Description
     1. People/person-first language or identity-first language as preferred and awareness of relevant terminology
     2. Communication etiquette
     3. Assistance/sighted guide techniques
  4. Assistive technologies and aids used by people who are blind or have low vision, including but not limited to:
     1. Service animals
     2. White canes
     3. Sighted guides
     4. Screen readers and magnifiers
     5. Assistive apps and other emerging technologies, e.g. audio beacons, AIRA, Be My Eyes, Microsoft Soundscape, and Spectrum Access

### Observation

A CAUDES must know and understand the following:

* 1. The components of active seeing
     1. Concentration/focus/attention
     2. Concepts associated with Visual Literacy
     3. Consideration of different audience vantage points
     4. Objectivity: Separating fact from interpretation
  2. The perspective/bias presented by the content
  3. One’s own personal perspective/bias
  4. When to identify the source of a sound
  5. Wayfinding in a physical environment

### Identifying Key Visual Elements

A CAUDES must know and understand how to assess and prioritize visual information in the context of what is to be described including but not limited to:

* 1. Elements of plot, action, costume/clothing, setting, objects, special effects, and physical characteristics of characters, actors, and people
  2. Educational and training materials including but not limited to: maps, charts, formulas, graphics, exhibits, and visual presentations and demonstrations
  3. Text, including captions, subtitles, and chyrons
  4. Important architectural or structural elements and navigational guidance
  5. When to use contextual and supplementary information such as event notes and/or Extended Audio Description
  6. When Audio Description is warranted and when it is not
  7. When to address inaccuracies or unintended action

### Language Skills

A CAUDES must know and understand the following:

* 1. How to use grammatical elements in spoken and written Audio Description
     1. Nouns and pronouns
     2. Verbs
     3. Adjectives
     4. Adverbs
     5. Prepositions
     6. Synonyms / Contranyms / Homonyms / Antonyms
     7. Simile and comparisons
     8. Phrases and sentence structure
     9. Active vs. passive voice
  2. How to identify and align appropriate use of content-specific vocabulary and jargon
     1. Recognition of bias introduced by language choices
     2. How personal beliefs, attitudes, sensibilities, and experience influence vocabulary choices
  3. How to be succinct
  4. How to align language choices for the intended audience
     1. When specific language is appropriate
     2. Assessing and interpreting audience preferences/needs
  5. How to align language choices for the client
     1. When specific language is appropriate
     2. Assessing and interpreting client specifications
  6. How to align language choices with current best practices regarding disability, diversity, inclusion, age, gender, and how an individual self- identifies
  7. How to assess the nature of material being described
     1. Common approaches to treatment of genres and themes
     2. How to conduct research for specific content
  8. How to write for the ear, i.e., its listenability and how it flows and sounds when read aloud
  9. How and when to use transliteration
  10. When to use labels versus detailed descriptions

### Listenability

A CAUDES must know and understand how to create and evaluate Audio Description that can be understood when delivered aloud, including the following elements of vocal delivery:

* 1. The standard speech elements used in Audio Description
     1. Pronunciation
     2. Enunciation
     3. Articulation
     4. Breath Control
  2. The properties of oral interpretation and their use in Audio Description
     1. Consonance
     2. Inflection
     3. Phrasing
     4. Cadence / Timing / Speed
     5. Volume
     6. Pitch
     7. Pause
     8. Emphasis
     9. Emotion
     10. Style

### Audio Description Production

A CAUDES must know and understand the following:

* 1. Standard elements of an Audio Description script
  2. Scriptwriting techniques for live and recorded Audio Description
  3. How to format an Audio Description script
  4. How to recognize and use timecode indicators
  5. Differences and similarities between production methods of Audio Description for post-production, live or extemporaneous delivery, or voicing subtitles in:
     1. Performing arts
     2. Broadcast media / Streaming services / Webinars
     3. Film
     4. Special / One-off events
     5. Museums / Visitor centers / Parks / Historic sites
     6. Educational / Training media
  6. How to work and collaborate with a production environment or team
     1. Creative teams including but not limited to content producers, directors, designers, actors, voice talents, curators, audiovisual technicians, and back of house staff
     2. Administrators including but not limited to marketers, schedulers, box- office, and front-of-house staff
     3. Individuals or entities commissioning the Audio Description
     4. Audio Description Consultants
     5. Audio Description Quality Control Specialists
     6. End users who are Blind/Low Vision and other audiences
  7. Professional conduct including time management, meeting deadlines, teamwork and communication, honoring commitments, and advance planning
  8. Awareness of the benefits and limitations of appropriate and relevant hardware, technologies, software, and apps for:
     1. Recording, editing, positioning, timing, and storing of Audio Description assets
     2. The acoustic environment, microphones, and sound booths
     3. Integrating with other sound (file formats, transmission equipment, and tour players)
     4. Current software products (free and for purchase)
  9. How the professional process of Audio Description, as reflected in established best practices, impacts client procedures or policies, including outreach

### The Audio Description Environment

A CAUDES must know and understand the following:

* 1. History of the formalization of the profession beginning in 1975
     1. In the US
     2. Globally
     3. Role of volunteer and/or non-professional (unpaid) Audio Describers including family members and friends
     4. Influence of all of the above on the professional practice of Audio Description
  2. Theoretical underpinnings of Audio Description and performance
     1. Entertainment
     2. Enjoyment (Hedonia)
     3. Visual aesthetics (Ekphrasis)
     4. Engagement
     5. Higher goals (Eudaimonia)
     6. Educational implications
  3. Regulations, laws, best practice guides
     1. In the US
     2. Globally
     3. Impact on practice
     4. Benefits and limitations
  4. How cultural sensitivities affect the creation and delivery of Audio Description, e.g., second language Audio Description, customs, and ethnic or regional considerations such as local vernacular and colloquialisms
  5. Awareness of how the main service organizations and related entities and audio-visual translation organizations/conferences support and define the practice of Audio Description
     1. In the US
     2. Globally
  6. CAUDES Code of Ethics

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Applied Competencies

To become a Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES), an Applicant must demonstrate competency in all of the skills identified below (listed in no particular order). Documentation providing evidence of competencies will be reviewed by ACVREP before the Applicant can be approved to proceed to the next step, taking the CAUDES exam.

### Observation

A CAUDES is able to:

* 1. Identify and/or describe potentially sensitive issues including but not limited to: skin color, race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual intimacy/situation, nudity, violence, compulsive behaviors, and religious or political imagery
  2. Recognize when to identify the source of a sound
  3. Identify and describe necessary elements of wayfinding in a physical environment

### Key Visual Elements

A CAUDES is able to assess the visual image in the context of what is to be audio described including but not limited to:

* 1. Distinguishing and prioritizing pertinent elements of plot, action, costume/clothing, setting, objects, special effects
  2. Physical characteristics of people, characters, and performers
  3. Informational materials such as images, maps, charts, formulas, graphics
  4. Works of art, exhibits, environments, or demonstrations
  5. Cultural and/or historic installations and exhibits including museums, galleries, welcome or visitor centers, and indoor or outdoor displays
  6. Avoiding excessive or extraneous description

### Language Skills

A CAUDES is able to:

* 1. Use concise language
  2. Align language choices for the intended audience
     1. When specific language is appropriate
     2. Assessing and interpreting audience preferences/needs
  3. Assess writing for the ear, i.e., how it sounds when read aloud
  4. Align language choices with best practices regarding disability, diversity, and inclusion

### Audio Description Production

A CAUDES is able to:

* 1. Work and collaborate with the following:
     1. Production environment/team
     2. Creative teams including but not limited to content producers, directors, designers, actors, voice talents, curators, audiovisual technicians, and house staff
     3. Administrators
     4. Individuals/Entities commissioning the Audio Description
     5. Audio Description Consultants
     6. End users/people who are Blind/Low Vision and other audiences
  2. Demonstrate professional practices including but not limited to:
     1. Time management
     2. Meeting deadlines
     3. Teamwork
     4. Communication
     5. Honoring commitments
     6. Advance planning
     7. Acquiring and learning how to use tools necessary for Audio Description work

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Code of Ethics

(Note: All underlined terms in this document are defined in the Glossary.)

### Preamble

A Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES) recognizes the responsibility and commitment to provide the highest quality of services to those individuals and organizations we serve.

Quality Audio Description provided by a CAUDES helps to reduce barriers to full inclusion and enables individuals to understand and experience important visual information independently and on a par with their sighted peers.

The primary obligation of a CAUDES is to Audio Description users; in all professional relationships, a CAUDES prioritizes their best interests. A CAUDES is committed to Audio Description users and their families, to employers, the community, the profession, colleagues and other professionals, and to oneself. A CAUDES recognizes actions and inactions affect the lives of those served, and accepts this responsibility.

### Fundamental Principles

1. The duty of a CAUDES is twofold: to the Audio Description user and to the client.
2. A CAUDES shall respect the privacy and confidentiality of the Audio Description user, unless required to disclose such information by law.
3. A CAUDES shall respect the privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property of the client, unless required to disclose such information by law.
4. Should a CAUDES seek the advice of another individual regarding a contract or work assignment, the CAUDES shall advise the consulting individual that the

consulting individual shall be bound by the same duty of privacy and confidentiality.

1. A CAUDES shall dress and comport oneself in a manner that is appropriate to the specific environment in which they are providing Audio Description.
2. A CAUDES shall not allow undue consideration of personal comfort or convenience to interfere with the design and implementation of the delivery of Audio Description.
3. A CAUDES shall advocate for oneself or others regarding personal safety, health, and well-being in the delivery of Audio Description.
4. A CAUDES shall establish and maintain a trusting relationship with Audio Description users and the client.
5. A CAUDES shall demonstrate respect for the diversity of Audio Description users, clients, and colleagues.
6. A CAUDES shall perform only those assignments for which the CAUDES possesses the requisite skills and professional knowledge.
7. A CAUDES shall prepare thoroughly for each assignment and be able to respond to variations in content.
8. A CAUDES shall disclose to the client any potential conflicts of interest.
9. A CAUDES shall not accept assignments if they are aware of any reason why they would not be able to successfully complete the assignment.
10. A CAUDES shall promptly notify a client if for any reason the CAUDES is unable to successfully complete an assignment.
11. An independent CAUDES shall charge appropriate fees and present professional invoices, as required, on a timely basis.
12. A CAUDES shall not accept gratuities or gifts of significance over and above the predetermined salary, fee, and/or expense for professional service.
13. A CAUDES shall report suspected or known violations of the Code of Ethics by filing a formal complaint to ACVREP.
14. A CAUDES shall not misrepresent their experience and/or qualifications.
15. A CAUDES shall not knowingly make false, deceptive, or fraudulent public statements concerning their practice or other work activities, nor that of persons or organizations with which they may or may not be affiliated.
16. A CAUDES’ Audio Description shall provide Audio Description users access that is on a par with their sighted peers.
17. If partnered with others on a single project, a CAUDES shall participate in establishing and maintaining communication to achieve a cohesive product.
18. A CAUDES shall abide by the terms of the contract or agreement with the client, including date(s) and time(s) and all applicable deadlines and deliverables.
19. A CAUDES shall stay current of and apply Audio Description best practices.
20. When creating Audio Description, a CAUDES shall not discriminate based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, age, national origin, marital status, political affiliation, or military status.
21. A CAUDES shall not allow personal bias to interfere with communicating the creative intent of the original work.

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Eligibility Requirements

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# Introduction

An Applicant may qualify to take the CAUDES certification exam through one of three tracks, either as a Category 1, Category 2, or Category 3 applicant. Differences among Categories 1, 2, and 3 involve education requirements and the number of hours worked in the two Audio Description types:

1. Extemporaneous or Live Audio Description is for live or in-the-moment performances and/or events, either prepared or improvised. Content examples include live theatre, concerts, dance, and parades.
2. Pre-produced or pre-recorded Audio Description has a prepared script that is recorded to be used when the content is delivered to, or accessed by, users at a later time. Content examples include film, television, museum exhibits, educational media, and video games.

Common to all categories is the need for experience in both types of Audio Description.

Note that while an Applicant’s minimum practical experience for Categories 2 and 3 may be fulfilled exclusively by one type of Audio Description or the other, *the exam will cover both types*.

Experience of either type may be acquired as an Audio Description staff employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer.

Please select the Category that applies to your specific education, training, and experience to determine your eligibility and documentation requirements for applying to take the CAUDES exam.

# Category 1:

## General Education, minimum requirement:

High School Diploma or equivalent or higher

## Additional Audio Description-specific education:

Successful completion of an assessment-based Audio Description training program that comprehensively meets the Body of Knowledge (BOK) areas of the CAUDES certification.

## Practical Experience:

Applicant must have the following experience writing and/or providing quality control for, or editing of, language for **LIVE** Audio Description.

All time requirements listed refer to Total Run Time (TRT):

**TEN hours** TRT of live performances or events, achieved through a minimum of **FIVE**

unique events,

**PLUS**

**FIVE hours** TRT of any combination of the four live Audio Description areas listed:

* 1. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences
  2. Area descriptions
  3. Live video game play events
  4. Pre-show/intermission descriptions ONLY

##### In addition,

Applicant must have the following experience writing and/or providing quality control for, or editing of, language for **PRE-RECORDED** Audio Description.

All time requirements listed refer to Total Run Time (TRT):

**TEN hours** TRT of pre-recorded media releases, achieved through a minimum of **FIVE**

unique releases,

**PLUS**

**FIVE hours** TRT of any combination of the seven pre-recorded Audio Description areas listed:

1. Works of art, installations, and/or exhibits
2. Outdoor attractions
3. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences
4. Instructional course material from a minimum of **TWO** different subject matters from elementary, secondary, or post-secondary educational institutions (e.g., STEAM subjects)
5. Social media, digital content, and other emerging technology experiences (e.g., video sharing, virtual reality)
6. Area descriptions, either scripted or extemporaneous
7. Video games (casual, serious, simulation, or for entertainment only)

## Required Documentation:

1. Original transcript sent directly to ACVREP from one or more accredited educational institution(s), i.e., high school and/or college/university, but not necessarily studies involving Audio Description-related training
2. Proof of successful completion of an Assessment-based Audio Description training program
3. Curriculum vitae listing Audio Description experience that includes media group, name and type of content, date(s) written/delivered, employment type (e.g., contract, independent, intern, volunteer, company/organization)
4. The applicant must submit **AT LEAST TWO** Applied Competency Skills Verification Form(s), completed and signed by individuals from any of the following three categories:
   1. Before January 1, 2028, one or more Audio Description professionals (those who craft Audio Description language and/or provide quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language) with three or more years of experience in live Audio Description, pre-recorded Audio Description, or a combination of both.

Thereafter, forms from this category shall be completed and signed by a CAUDES.

* 1. One or more Employers/Clients/Organizations for whom the applicant has provided Audio Description services
  2. One or more Audio Description users who have attended/viewed three or more audio-described live events, pre-recorded media releases/broadcasts, or museum tours in any combination prepared by the applicant.

Wherever possible, the Audio Description user shall have participated in at least one Audio Description consumer survey or focus group, served as an Audio Description Consultant who has provided feedback used for quality assessment, and/or participated in the training of Audio Description professional

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# Category 2:

## General Education, minimum requirement:

Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree or equivalent international degree/diploma globally recognized or verified by a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) organization

## Practical Experience:

Applicant must have the following experience writing and/or providing quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language.

All time requirements listed refer to Total Run Time (TRT).

**THIRTY hours** TRT of any combination of the five (5) live Audio Description areas and the eight (8) pre-recorded Audio Description areas listed:

Live:

1. Live performances or events,
2. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences,
3. Area descriptions,
4. Live video game play events,
5. Pre-show/intermission descriptions ONLY;

Pre-Recorded:

1. Pre-recorded media releases
2. Works of art, installations, and/or exhibits,
3. Outdoor attractions,
4. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences,
5. Instructional course material from a minimum of **TWO** different subject matters from elementary, secondary, or post-secondary educational institutions (e.g., STEAM subjects),
6. Social media, digital content, and other emerging technology experiences (e.g., video sharing, virtual reality),
7. Area descriptions, either scripted or extemporaneous,
8. Video games (casual, serious, simulation, or for entertainment only).

## Required Documentation:

1. Original transcript sent directly to ACVREP from one or more accredited educational institution(s), i.e., college/university
2. Curriculum vitae listing Audio Description experience that includes media group, name and type of content, date(s) written/delivered, employment type (e.g., contract, independent, intern, volunteer, company/organization)
3. The applicant must submit **AT LEAST THREE** Applied Competency Skills Verification Form(s), completed and signed by individuals from any of the following three categories:
   1. Before January 1, 2028, one or more Audio Description professionals (those who craft Audio Description language and/or provide quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language) with three or more years of experience in live Audio Description, pre-recorded Audio Description, or a combination of both. Thereafter, forms from this category shall be completed and signed by a CAUDES.
   2. One or more Audio Description Employers/Organizations
   3. One or more Audio Description users who have attended/viewed three or more audio-described live events, pre-recorded media releases/broadcasts, or museum tours in any combination prepared by the applicant.

Wherever possible, the Audio Description user shall have participated in at least one Audio Description consumer survey or focus group, served as an Audio Description Consultant who has provided feedback used for quality assessment, and/or participated in the training of Audio Description professionals.

# Category 3:

## General Education, minimum requirement:

High School Diploma or equivalent

## Practical Experience:

Applicant must have the following experience writing and/or providing quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language.

All time requirements listed refer to Total Run Time (TRT).

**FORTY hours** TRT of any combination of the five (5) live Audio Description areas and the eight (8) pre-recorded Audio Description areas listed:

Live:

1. Live performances or events,
2. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences,
3. Area descriptions,
4. Live video game play events,
5. Pre-show/intermission descriptions ONLY;

Pre-Recorded:

1. Pre-recorded media releases
2. Works of art, installations, and/or exhibits,
3. Outdoor attractions,
4. Seminars, workshops, and/or conferences,
5. Instructional course material from a minimum of **TWO** different subject matters from elementary, secondary, or post-secondary educational institutions (e.g., STEAM subjects),
6. Social media, digital content, and other emerging technology experiences (e.g., video sharing, virtual reality),
7. Area descriptions, either scripted or extemporaneous,
8. Video games (casual, serious, simulation, or for entertainment only).

## Required Documentation:

1. Original transcript sent directly to ACVREP from one or more accredited educational institution(s), i.e., college/university
2. Curriculum vitae listing Audio Description experience that includes media group, name and type of content, date(s) written/delivered, employment type (e.g., contract, independent, intern, volunteer, company/organization)
3. The applicant must submit **AT LEAST THREE** Applied Competency Skills Verification Form(s), completed and signed by individuals from any of the following three categories:
   1. Before January 1, 2028, one or more Audio Description professionals (those who craft Audio Description language and/or provide quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language) with three or more years of experience in live description, pre-recorded media description, or a combination of both. Thereafter, forms from this category shall be completed and signed by a CAUDES.
   2. One or more Audio Description Employers/Organizations
   3. One or more Audio Description users who have attended/viewed three or more audio-described live events, pre-recorded media releases/broadcasts, or museum tours in any combination prepared by the applicant.

Wherever possible, the Audio Description user shall have participated in at least one Audio Description consumer survey or focus group, served as an Audio Description Consultant who has provided feedback used for quality assessment, and/or participated in the training of Audio Description professionals.

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Five-Year Recertification Requirements

A critical function of professional certification is the continual enhancement of individual professional competencies. To facilitate this responsibility, ACVREP mandates certified professionals participate in continuing education (CE) opportunities and other professional development activities, such as presenting at professional conferences. In addition, CAUDES are required to consistently provide services in an ethical manner according to the CAUDES Code of Ethics.

All CAUDES professionals are required to renew their certification through the recertification process every five (5) years. This requirement supports ACVREP’s mission of advancing professional competency to support the provision of quality service.

Applicants shall accrue a minimum of 100 points across the following four (4) categories:

##### Category 1: CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) – 10 POINTS MANDATORY MINIMUM ALL 100 POINTS MAY BE EARNED IN THIS CATEGORY.

In order to earn points in this category, continuing education must relate to Audio Description such as advanced or specialized Audio Description practice, audio production (hardware and/or software), and continuing education that improves observation, concentration, voicing, and writing skills.

Points may be accrued in any combination of the following options:

##### ACVREP-Approved Continuing Education Provider

Workshops, Seminars, Conferences: 1 completed hour = 1 point

***Documentation Required:*** *Signed certificate of completion stating hours earned uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### University/College Courses

1 semester credit hour = 15 points 1 trimester credit hour = 14 points 1 quarter credit hour = 10 points

***Documentation Required:*** *University/college official transcript documenting course completion uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### University/College Continuing Education Unit ("CEU")

1 CEU is equivalent to 10 contact hours = 10 points

***Documentation Required:*** *University/college official transcript or university/college certificate of completion stating hours earned uploaded into recertification tracker.*

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#### CATEGORY 2: PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE - 10 POINTS MANDATORY MINIMUM, 80 POINTS MAXIMUM

In order to earn any points in this category, you must meet the minimum hours of professional experience, either paid or as a volunteer, in either live or pre-recorded media.

Points may be accrued in any combination of the following options:

**CAUDES**

Two (2) hours Total Run Time (TRT) creating Audio Description language = 1 point

Two (2) hours TRT providing quality control for, or editing of, Audio Description language = 1 point

##### Supervisor in Audio Description Production within/for an Organization

Eight (8) hours of Audio Description supervision = 1 point

##### University/college professor/administrator researching, teaching, or advising\* in Audio Description, Audio Visual Translation, or Inclusive Media

Eight (8) hours = 1 point

##### Mentoring/training Entry Level Audio Description Professionals or Interns

Four (4) hours of mentoring or training = 1 point

***Documentation Required:*** *Statement on organization/university/college letterhead stating the required hours have been met in the most recent five (5) years and the exact roles and responsibilities uploaded into the recertification tracker. For a CAUDES: In lieu of a letter, you may provide copies of contracts, paid invoices, or equivalent evidence of completed hours uploaded into the recertification tracker.*

***\**** *All tasks related to researching, teaching, and advising, including related activities such as course preparation, writing, reviewing research papers, graduate student supervision, etc., may be counted towards these hours.*

#### CATEGORY 3: PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS - 50 POINTS MAXIMUM

In order to earn any points in this category, publications and presentations must relate to the topic(s) of Audio Description.

Points may be accrued in any combination of the following options:

##### Editorials

One (1) Editorial = 2 points

***Documentation Required:*** *A copy of published editorial within the most recent five*

*(5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Journal Articles

One (1) Peer-reviewed original research = 25 points

One (1) Peer-reviewed publication on practice = 20 points One (1) Not peer reviewed = 5 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Copy of article or journal providing evidence of whether or not article has been peer reviewed within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into the recertification tracker.*

##### Peer Reviewer

One (1) Journal Article = 1 point per article One (1) Textbook = 5 points per chapter review

***Documentation Required:*** *Evidence from publisher for which peer review was done in the form of a signed letter on publisher's letterhead within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Newsletter

One (1) Article = 1 point Editing one (1) issue = 5 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Copy of the newsletter/link to newsletter within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Online Content such as Blogs, Website, Videos (such as YouTube), Interviews, Podcasts

One (1) hour Total Run Time (TRT) of video or audio content = 1 point Print content totaling 2000 words minimum = 1 point

***Documentation Required:*** *Link to content created within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Textbook (Published)

Author = 50 points

One (1) Chapter Author = 20 points Editor = 25 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Index or other evidence of role within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Journal or Book Review (Published)

One (1) Review = 10 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Copy of review/link to review within the most recent five*

*(5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Research Abstract (Published)

One (1) Research Abstract = 2 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Copy of abstract/link to abstract within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Completed Master’s Degree / Doctorate

Master's Thesis = 30 points Doctoral Dissertation = 50 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Copy of thesis/link to thesis or dissertation/link to dissertation within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Guest/Periodic Lecturing College / University Course

One (1) lecture hour = 2 points

***Documentation Required:*** *Signed letter from college/university on their letterhead stating number of hours of lecture have been met in the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Presentation at Academic, Professional, or Consumer Conference/CE Program

One (1) hour Conference/CE Program Presentation = 2 points One (1) Poster Session = 1 point

***Documentation Required:*** *Signed letter or Certificate from conference or CE program provider evidencing your presentation date and hour(s) have been met in the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

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#### CATEGORY 4: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - 20 POINTS MAXIMUM

Professional Services include paid or volunteer services in organizations where there is a focus on Audio Description.

##### Local/National/International Organization Officer/Committee Chair

Ten (10) points per year

***Documentation Required:*** *signed letter of organization letterhead stating the position and years of service verifying at least two meetings per year during years of service within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Local/National/International Organization Board/Committee Member

Five (5) points per year

***Documentation Required:*** *signed letter of organization letterhead stating the position and years of service verifying at least two meetings per year during years of service within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### ACVREP Subject Matter Expert Committee

Two (2) points per hour served

***Documentation Required:*** *email from ACVREP President verifying hours of service in most recent five (5) years including subcommittee hours, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

##### Service on an Internal Employer-sponsored Committee

Two (2) points per year

***Documentation Required:*** *signed letter from Employer on letterhead evidencing years of service verifying at least 5 committee meetings per year during years of service within the most recent five (5) years, uploaded into recertification tracker.*

Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)

Glossary

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| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **Area descriptions** | Descriptions for a geographical locale such as a museum, theme park, or virtual reality environments. Can include layout, visual inventory, and wayfinding. . |
| **Articulation** | The movement of the tongue, teeth, lips, jaw, and other speech organs in order to form speech. |
| **Assessment-based Audio Description training/education for Category 1 eligibility** | ACVREP-approved education/instructional offerings that have assessments in the form of assignments, tests, quizzes, exams, and hands-on activities.  These offerings can be a separate program or series dedicated to Audio Description, or be part of a wider program that covers all elements of the Body of Knowledge. |
| **Assessment-based Audio Description training program certificate** | An official document attesting to successful completion of an assessment-based Audio Description training program provided by the academic institution. |
| **Audience** | The patrons who use an Audio Description service for live or pre-recorded events, such as a TV show, film, performing arts, or museum. |

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| **Audio Describer** | A trained professional who translates visual information into words. |
| **Audio Description** | The translation of visual information into words, typically spoken.  The creation of vivid descriptions of key visual elements, primarily for people who are blind or have low vision. |
| **Audio Description Consultant** | Professional who has knowledge of best practices, guidelines, and quality for an Audio Description track, script, or performance, and works with clients to support the creation and production of Audio Description. It is often someone who is blind or has low vision.  They may also assist with community outreach, development of organizational policies and procedures applying to access, and conduct staff training to provide accessibility services. |
| **Audio Description Quality Control Specialist** | A professional with experience and training in Audio Description best practices who reviews and edits Audio Description language for content clarity, consistency, and accuracy.  Many Audio Description Quality Control Specialists are blind or have low vision |
| **Audio Description User** | Patron or individual who actively listens to Audio Description while attending a live event or viewing pre-recorded media. The majority of those who use Audio Description are blind or have low vision.  Also known as Audio Description Consumer |

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| **Audio editing** | The use of software to manipulate and mix recorded audio tracks to create a desired sound combination of the original soundtrack and voiced Audio Description, using techniques such as ducking, length, and speed adjustments. |
| **Breath control** | The use of your diaphragm to fill your lungs with air and then gradually release it is very important for developing your vocal range, quality of tone, and ability to maintain a consistent level during a phrase. |
| **Cadence** | The words chosen to emphasize, and the up and down movement of pitch throughout spoken sentences. |
| **Certificate of participation** | A document attesting to successful completion of an Audio Description training program, usually not associated with an academic institution. |
| **Certified Audio Description Specialist (CAUDES)** | A person who has passed the ACVREP Audio Description Certification Examination. |
| **Chyron** | An electronically generated caption superimposed on a video image. |
| **Client** | The organization or individual that hires an Audio Describer to provide description for a public event such as a play, movie, or concert. |
| **Consonance/tone** | The alignment of a voice talent’s vocal quality with the mood or atmosphere of the material being described. |

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| **Cue /audio cue** | Typically, a line of dialogue or sound effect that denotes (along with the time code) the beginning of the pause where the description will be inserted. |
| **Digital asset manager** | The individual responsible for curating, organizing, documenting, and cataloging an organization’s electronically stored binary data, which may include (but is not limited to) images, videos, audio files, and written content. |
| **Ekphrasis** | A vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art. |
| **Emphasis** | Force or intensity of expression that gives impressiveness or importance to something.  Stress laid on a word or words to indicate special meaning or particular importance. |
| **Enhanced Audio Description** | Enhanced Audio Description can use a variety of narrative and emotive styles in the creation of Audio Description language. It may also employ experiential, sensory, tactile, haptic, or audio techniques as part of the description. |
| **Enunciation** | How clearly and distinctly sounds are formed when pronouncing a word or proper name. |
| **Eudaimonia** | Defined in positive psychology models as a complementary factor to hedonia related to longer term factors affecting well- being; the pursuit of excellence, personal growth, and goal achievement. |

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| **Extended Audio Description** | A form of Audio Description that pauses media playback to present human- or machine-read Audio Description that would otherwise not fit in the existing pace and format in the program material.  Also known as Extended Description. |
| **Games**: **casual, simulation, serious, and entertainment- only games** | Casual game is an online game that is played intermittently and is short duration. Often played on mobile devices.  Serious game is a video game that is played for a purpose beyond entertainment only such as learning, health, etc.  Simulations are a computer or mobile game that copy or model real-life experiences in game form. They are often used for training and education purposes.  Entertainment-only game is played with the sole purpose of fun and enjoyment. |
| **Hedonia** | Defined in positive psychology models as one factor in the concept of subjective human well-being. Hedonia refers to feelings that should be encouraged and promoted by activities, or designs; these are the short-term feelings of pleasure, comfort, happiness, and enjoyment. |
| **Human guide** | An individual who employs established techniques to guide someone who is blind or has low vision along a path of travel. |
| **Inflection** | the modulation of intonation or pitch in the voice |

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| **Integrated Audio Description** | A form of Audio Description developed in collaboration with the creative team as part of the original work.  Also known as Integrated Description. |
| **Key Visual Elements** | The visual images that are essential to understand and appreciate the overall work. |
| **Live performances or events** | Presentations delivered in real-time. |
| **Live media releases** | Broadcasts or film events (with or without preview opportunities) requiring audio description to be provided extemporaneously. |
| **Live Audio Description** | Audio Description that may be provided extemporaneously or voiced from a script prepared in advance and adapted in real time. |
| **Live video game play events** | Scheduled, on-line video game play streamed live; can occur as a discrete event that often takes place over more than one day, or through a streaming service. |
| **Mix** | The process of combining recorded Audio Description with the soundtrack of a film, TV show, or other media. |
| **Mix session** | The period of time where a Producer and Audio Engineer integrate recorded Audio Description with a show's soundtrack. |

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|  | Typically undertaken in a recording studio, also called a mix room. |
| **Non-assessment-based Audio Description training** | Instruction in Audio Description without a component that provides a formal evaluation of individual participants’ skills. |
| **Objectivity/objective** | Providing facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations. |
| **Orientation and mobility (O&M)** | The field dealing with the systematic techniques by which people who are blind and visually impaired know where they are in space, know where things are in their environment, and move about safely through that environment. |
| **Pause** | A period of time of any length that occurs between lines of dialogue, lyrics, or major sound effects in a live or pre-recorded show or event. Audio Description is inserted into pauses to convey key visual elements without interfering with the live audio or recorded soundtrack. |
| **Phrasing** | The act, method, or result in which a thought or idea is expressed or put into words. |
| **Pitch** | The quality of a sound that allows one to label it as “higher” or “lower” than another sound. |

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| **Pre-show/intermission description** | Pre-show/intermission description for a live performance includes descriptions of the venue, characters and actors, costumes, sets and set changes, and special effects, plus selected program notes. Pre-show/intermission description may be presented live before a performance and during intermission breaks, rendered in Large Print and/or Braille, and/or recorded and made available digitally. |
| **Pre-recorded Audio Description** | It is based on research and analysis, scripted and voiced/recorded audio description. The audio description track is then mixed according to timecodes in the original soundtrack and laid back or provided as a separate timed audio file. |
| **Pre-recorded media description** | Pre-recorded, or pre-produced, Audio Description has a prepared script that is recorded to be used when the content is delivered to, or accessed by, users at a later time. Content examples include film, television, museum exhibits, educational media, and video games. |
| **Pre-recorded media releases** | Film or theatrical releases, TV shows, DVDs, educational or training videos, 3-D imagery, virtual reality, or any other pre- recorded digital media such as interactive kiosks and touchscreens. |
| **Producer / Post-production Supervisor** | Individual who runs mix sessions, working with the voice talent and the audio engineer to produce a seamless integration of the recorded Audio Description with a show's soundtrack. |
| **Pronunciation** | How the syllables of a word are stressed and how certain letters or combinations of letters should sound when spoken. |

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| **Protactile** | Protactile is a tactile communication language used in the DeafBlind community. It is an interactive language practiced directly on the body. |
| **Recording session** | The period of time where a producer and audio engineer direct and record an Audio Description narrator voicing a written Audio Description script. Typically undertaken in a recording studio. |
| **Second language learner** | A person who is in the process of learning a language other than their first language. |
| **Social media** | Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Both personally and professionally, social media such as Twitter or Facebook are used to connect with various groups or individuals and can also be utilized for marketing / posting resources. |
| **Speed** | The rate at which Audio Description is spoken, typically expressed as the number of words spoken per minute. |
| **STEAM subjects** | Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics subjects in education |
| **Style** | How language (written and/or spoken) is used to convey mood, emotion, “mental imagery,” and intended meaning. |
| **Tempo/Rhythm** | The pace at which Audio Description is spoken, which may vary in rate over time. |

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| **Text to speech (TTS)** | Technology used to convert text into a synthetic voice imitating the human voice. Sometimes used instead of voice talent to provide the voicing of written Audio Description. |
| **Timecode** | A sequence of numbers used in recorded media production to indicate hours, minutes, seconds, and frames. Describers use timecode to fit description into pauses, indicating precise locations to the voice talent, the Audio Engineer, and the Producer in a mix session. |
| **Timing** | The ability to accurately synchronize extemporaneous or voiced, scripted Audio Description with the pace and delivery of the content, employing subtle adjustments of beat duration, or of tempo, to match its aesthetic effect. |
| **Total Run Time (TRT)** | The total duration, usually in minutes, of an audiovisual item. The series of numbers listed can inform users of the entire playing time that an experience will take. |
| **Transliteration** | Capitalization, spacing, and spelling that results in a clear indication of how a word is to sound when spoken, e.g., “emphasis” = “M-fuh-sis” or “Jorge Diaz Cintas” = “HOR-hay DEE-ahz SIN-tass.” |
| **Video game play events** | Discrete events that occur synchronously or asynchronously during a video game play conference or streaming service (e.g., Twitch). |
| **Video sharing** | Service for uploading and sharing user-generated video content with others. Can be asynchronous (e.g, YouTube) or synchronous (e.g., streaming). |

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| **Virtual reality (VR)** | A computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment, such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors. This artificial environment which is experienced through sensory stimuli (such as sights and sounds) will allow one's actions to partially determine what happens in the environment.  Also, can be the word used colloquially to describe the technology that creates or accesses a virtual reality. |

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| **Visual literacy** | Visual Literacy is the learned ability to understand and interpret visual images, and to translate that information into descriptions of those visual images.  When preparing descriptive language, a CAUDES may use multiple senses including but not limited to vision, hearing, and tactile interaction. |
| **Voice talent/Audio Description narrator** | The individual(s) who voice scripted Audio Description. For media (film and television), the voice talent is separate from the Audio Describer. |
| **Volume** | A speaker's voice level from loud to soft. |
| **Wayfinding** | The act of moving through an environment with purpose. Wayfinding requires planning, skills, and an ability to gather and receive information about the environment. |
| **Write for the ear** | Writing technique considering how words will sound when spoken aloud. |
| **Works of art, installations, and/or exhibits** | Indoor or outdoor presentation of individual pieces or a thematic collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures, memorabilia, and/or other media that may be accompanied by signage, special effects, and/or informative videos. |