

Article 22.

Licensure Act for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

§ 90-292. Declaration of policy.

It is declared to be a policy of the State of North Carolina that, in order to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare; to protect the public from being misled by incompetent, unscrupulous, and unauthorized persons and from unprofessional conduct on the part of qualified speech and language pathologists and audiologists and to help assure the availability of the highest possible quality speech and language pathology and audiology services to the communicatively handicapped people of this State, it is necessary to provide regulatory authority over persons offering speech and language pathology and audiology services to the public. (1975, c. 773, s. 1.)

§ 90-293. Definitions.

As used in this Article, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "Audiologist" means any person who engages in the practice of audiology. A person is deemed to be an audiologist if he offers services to the public under any title incorporating the terms of "audiology," "audiologist," "audiological," "hearing clinic," "hearing clinician," "hearing therapist," or any similar title or description of service.
- (2) "Board" means the Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists.
- (3) "License" means a license issued by the Board under the provisions of this Article, including a temporary license.
- (4) "Person" means an individual, organization, or corporate body, except that only individuals can be licensed under this Article.
- (5) "Speech and language pathologist" means any person who represents himself or herself to the public by title or by description of services, methods, or procedures as one who evaluates, examines, instructs, counsels, or treats persons suffering from conditions or disorders affecting speech and language or swallowing. A person is deemed to be a speech and language pathologist if the person offers such services under any title incorporating the words "speech pathology," "speech pathologist," "speech correction," "speech correctionist," "speech therapy," "speech therapist," "speech clinic," "speech clinician," "language pathologist," "language therapist," "logopedist," "communication disorders," "communicologist," "voice therapist," "voice pathologist," or any similar title or description of service.
- (6) "The practice of audiology" means the application of principles, methods, and procedures of measurement, testing, evaluation, prediction, consultation, counseling, instruction, habilitation, or rehabilitation related to hearing and vestibular disorders for the purpose of identifying, preventing, ameliorating, or modifying such disorders and conditions in individuals or groups of individuals. For the purpose of this subdivision, the words "habilitation" and "rehabilitation" shall include auditory training, speech reading, aural rehabilitation, hearing aid use evaluation and recommendations, and fabrication of earmolds and similar accessories for clinical testing purposes.
- (7) "The practice of speech and language pathology" means the application of principles, methods, and procedures for the measurement, testing, evaluation,

prediction, counseling, treating, instruction, habilitation, or rehabilitation related to the development and disorders of speech, voice, language, and swallowing for the purpose of identifying, preventing, ameliorating, or modifying such disorders.

(8) Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 665, s. 1.

(9) "Accredited college or university" means an institution of higher learning accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities, or accredited by a similarly recognized association of another locale. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 1; 2007-436, s. 1.)

§ 90-294. License required; Article not applicable to certain activities.

(a) Licensure shall be granted in either speech and language pathology or audiology independently. A person may be licensed in both areas if qualified in both areas.

(b) No person may practice or hold himself or herself out as being able to practice speech and language pathology or audiology in this State unless the person holds a current, unsuspended, unrevoked license issued by the Board or is registered with the Board as an assistant. The license required by this section shall be kept conspicuously posted in the person's office or place of business at all times. Nothing in this Article, however, shall be construed to prevent a qualified person licensed in this State under any other law from engaging in the profession or occupation for which such person is licensed.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-410, s. 47.7(a), effective August 23, 2013.

(c1) The provisions of this Article do not apply to:

(1) The activities, services, and use of an official title by a person employed by an agency of the federal government and solely in connection with such employment.

(2) The activities and services of a student or trainee in speech and language pathology or audiology pursuing a course of study in an accredited college or university, or working in a training center program approved by the Board, if these activities and services constitute a part of the person's course of study.

(3) Individuals licensed under Chapter 93D of the General Statutes.

(d) Nothing in this Article shall apply to a physician licensed to practice medicine, or to any person employed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the course of the physician's practice of medicine.

(e) This Article shall not be construed to prevent any person licensed in this State under Chapter 93D of the General Statutes of North Carolina from the practice of fitting and selling hearing aids.

(f) The provisions of this Article do not apply to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses or other certified technicians trained to perform audiometric screening tests and whose work is under the supervision of a physician, consulting physician, or licensed audiologist.

(g) The provisions of this Article do not apply to persons who are now or may become engaged in counseling or instructing laryngectomees in the methods, techniques or problems of learning to speak again.

(h) No license under this Article is required for persons originally employed by any agency of State government between October 1, 1975, and July 1, 1977, for the practice of speech and language pathology or audiology within and during the course and scope of employment with such agency.

(i) Nothing in this Article shall apply to a licensed physical therapy or occupational therapy practitioner providing evaluation and treatment of swallowing disorders, cognitive/communication deficits, and balance functions within the context of his or her licensed practice. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1977, c. 692, s. 3; 1981, c. 572, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 665, s. 2; 1989, c. 770, s. 17; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 688, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2007-436, ss. 2, 3(a), 3(b); 2013-410, s. 47.7(a), (b).)

§ 90-295. Qualifications of applicants for permanent licensure.

(a) To be eligible for permanent licensure by the Board as a speech and language pathologist, the applicant must:

- (1) Possess at least a master's degree in speech and language pathology or qualifications deemed equivalent by the Board under rules duly adopted by the Board under this Article. The degree or equivalent qualifications shall be from an accredited institution.
- (2) Submit transcripts from one or more accredited colleges or universities presenting evidence of the completion of 75 semester hours constituting a well-integrated program of course study dealing with the normal aspects of human communication, development thereof, disorders thereof, and clinical techniques for evaluation and management of such disorders.
 - a. Fifteen of these 75 semester hours must be obtained in courses that provide information that pertains to normal development and use of speech, language and hearing.
 - b. Thirty-six of these 75 semester hours must be in courses that provide information relative to communication disorders and information about and training in evaluation and management of speech, language, and hearing disorders. At least 24 of these 30 semester hours must be in courses in speech and language pathology.
 - c. Credit for study of information pertaining to related fields that augment the work of the clinical practitioner of speech and language pathology or audiology may also apply toward the total 75 semester hours.
 - d. Thirty-six of the total 75 semester hours that are required for a license must be in courses that are acceptable toward a graduate degree by the college or university at which they are taken. Moreover, 21 of those semester hours must be in graduate level courses in speech and language pathology.
- (3) Submit evidence of the completion of a minimum of 400 clock hours of supervised, direct clinical experience with individuals who present a variety of communication disorders. This experience must have been obtained within the training institution or in one of its cooperating programs in the following areas: (i) Speech – Adult (20 diagnostic and 20 therapeutic); Children (20 diagnostic and 20 therapeutic); and (ii) Language – Adult (20 diagnostic and 20 therapeutic); Children (20 diagnostic and 20 therapeutic). Each new applicant must submit a verified clinical clock hour summary sheet signed by the clinic or program director, in addition to completion of the license application.
- (4) Present written evidence of nine months of full-time professional experience in which bona fide clinical work has been accomplished in speech and language

pathology. The professional work must have been supervised by a speech and language pathologist who is State-licensed or certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. This experience must follow the completion of the requirements listed in subdivisions (1), (2) and (3). Full time is defined as at least nine months in a calendar year and a minimum of 30 hours per week. Half time is defined as at least 18 months in two calendar years and a minimum of 20 hours per week. The supervision must be performed by a person who holds a valid license under this Article, or certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, in speech and language pathology.

- (5) Pass an examination established or approved by the Board.
 - (6) Exercise good moral conduct as defined in rules adopted by the Board or in a code of moral conduct adopted by the Board.
- (b) To be eligible for permanent licensure by the Board as an audiologist, the applicant must:
- (1) Possess a doctoral degree in audiology or qualifications deemed equivalent by the Board under rules duly adopted by the Board under this Article. The degree or equivalent qualifications shall be from an accredited institution.
 - (2) Persons who were engaged in the practice of audiology and do not possess a doctoral degree in audiology before October 1, 2007, shall be exempt from the degree requirement in subdivision (1) of this subsection provided those persons remain continuously licensed in the field.
 - (3) Submit transcripts from one or more accredited colleges or universities presenting evidence of the completion of 90 semester hours constituting a well-integrated program of course study dealing with the normal aspects of human communication, the development of human communication, the disorders associated with human communication, and the clinical techniques for evaluation and management of such disorders.
 - (4) Present written evidence documenting 1,800 clock hours of professional experience directly supervised by an audiologist who is State-licensed or certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association or other Board-approved agency. The clock hours of professional experience must be with individuals who present a variety of communication and auditory disorders and must have been obtained within the training program at an accredited college or university or in one of its cooperating programs.
 - (5) Pass an examination established or approved by the Board.
 - (6) Exercise good moral conduct as defined in rules adopted by the Board or in a code of moral conduct adopted by the Board. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 3; 2007-436, s. 4; 2009-138, s. 1; 2013-410, s. 47.7(c).)

§ 90-296. Examinations.

- (a) An applicant for licensure who has satisfied the academic requirements of G.S. 90-295, shall pass a written examination approved or established by the Board.
- (b) The Board shall administer or approve at least two examinations of the type described in subsection (a) of this section each year, and additional examinations as the volume of applications makes appropriate.

- (c) An examination shall not be required as a prerequisite for a license for:
 - (1) A person who holds a certificate of clinical competence issued by the American Speech-Hearing-Language Association in the specialized area for which such person seeks licensure; or
 - (2) A person who has met the educational, practical experience, and examination requirements of another state or jurisdiction which has requirements equivalent to or higher than those in effect pursuant to this Article for the practice of audiology or speech pathology. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1981, c. 572, s. 3; 1987, c. 665, s. 4; 2013-410, s. 47.7(d).)

§ 90-297. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 665, s. 5.

§ 90-298. Qualifications for applicants for temporary licensure.

- (a) To be eligible for temporary licensure an applicant must:
 - (1) Meet the academic and clinical practicum requirements of G.S. 90-295(1), (2), and (3); and
 - (2) Submit a plan of supervised experience complying with the provisions of G.S. 90-295(4); and
 - (3) Pay the temporary license fee required by G.S. 90-305(5).
- (b) A temporary license is required when an applicant has not completed the required supervised experience and passed the required examination.
- (c) A temporary license issued under this section shall be valid only during the period of supervised experience required by G.S. 90-295(4), and shall not be renewed. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 6; 2013-410, s. 47.7(e).)

§ 90-298.1. Registered assistant.

A licensed speech and language pathologist or a licensed audiologist may register with the Board an assistant who works under the licensee's supervision if all of the following requirements are met:

- (1) The assistant meets the qualifications for registered assistants adopted by the Board.
- (2) The licensee who supervises the assistant pays the registration fee set by the Board.

A registration of an assistant must be renewed annually. To renew the registration of an assistant, the licensee who supervises the assistant must submit an application for renewal and pay the renewal fee. An initial or renewal fee for registering an assistant may not exceed the renewal license fee set under G.S. 90-305. (1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 688, s. 2.)

§ 90-299. Licensee to notify Board of place of practice.

- (a) A person who holds a license shall notify the Board in writing of the address of the place or places where he engages or intends to engage in the practice of speech and language pathology or audiology.
- (b) The Board shall keep a record of the places of practice of licensees.
- (c) Any notice required to be given by the Board to a licensee may be given by mailing it to him at the address of the last place of practice of which he has notified the Board. (1975, c. 773, s. 1.)

§ 90-300. Renewal of licenses.

A licensee shall annually pay to the Board a fee in an amount established by the General Assembly for a renewal of his license. A 30-day grace period shall be allowed after expiration of a license during which the license may be renewed on payment of a fee in an amount established by the General Assembly. The Board may suspend the license of any person who fails to renew his license before the expiration of the 30-day grace period. After expiration of the grace period, the Board may renew such a license upon the payment of a fee in an amount established by the General Assembly. No person who applies for renewal whose license was suspended for failure to renew shall be required to submit to any examination as a condition of renewal. (1975, c. 773, s. 1.)

§ 90-301. Grounds for suspension or revocation of license.

Any person licensed under this Article may have his license revoked or suspended for a fixed period by the Board under the provisions of North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 150B, for any of the following causes:

- (1) His license has been secured by fraud or deceit practiced upon the Board.
- (2) Fraud or deceit in connection with his services rendered as an audiologist or speech and language pathologist.
- (3) Unethical or immoral conduct as defined in this Article or in a code of ethics adopted by the Board.
- (4) Violation of any lawful order, rule or regulation rendered or adopted by the Board.
- (5) Failure to exercise a reasonable degree of professional skill and care in the delivery of professional services.
- (6) Any violation of the provisions of this Article.
- (7) Failure to exercise good moral conduct as defined in rules adopted by the Board or in a code of moral conduct adopted by the Board. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1981, c. 572, s. 4; 1987, c. 665, s. 7; c. 827, s. 1; 2013-410, s. 47.7(f).)

§ 90-301A. Unethical acts and practices.

Unethical acts and practices shall be defined as including:

- (1) Obtaining or attempting to obtain any fee by fraud or misrepresentation.
- (2) Employing directly or indirectly any suspended or unlicensed person to perform any work covered by this Article.
- (3) Using, or causing or promoting the use of any advertising matter, promotional literature, testimonial, guarantee, warranty, label, brand, insignia, or any other representation, however disseminated or published, which is misleading, deceiving, improbable, or untruthful.
- (4) Aiding, abetting, or assisting any other person or entity in violating the provisions of this Article.
- (5) Willfully harming any person in the course of the delivery of professional services licensed by this Article.
- (6) Treating a person who cannot reasonably be expected to benefit from treatment.
- (7) Charging a fee for treatment or services not rendered.
- (8) Providing or attempting to provide services or supervision of services by persons not properly prepared or legally qualified to perform or permitting

services to be provided by a person under such person's supervision who is not properly prepared or legally qualified to perform such services.

- (9) Guaranteeing the result of any therapeutic or evaluation procedure. (1987, c. 665, s. 8.)

§ 90-302. Prohibited acts and practices.

No person, partnership, corporation, or other entity may:

- (1) Sell, barter, transfer or offer to sell or barter a license.
- (2) Purchase or procure by barter a license with intent to use it as evidence of the holder's qualification to practice audiology or speech and language pathology.
- (3) Alter a license.
- (4) Use or attempt to use a valid license which has been purchased, fraudulently obtained, counterfeited or materially altered.
- (5) Make a false, material statement in an application for a North Carolina license.
- (6) Aid, assist, abet, or direct any person licensed under this Article in violation of the provisions of this Article. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 9; 2013-410, s. 47.7(g).)

§ 90-303. Board of Examiners for speech and language pathology and audiology; qualifications, appointment and terms of members; vacancies; meetings, etc.

(a) There shall be a Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists, which shall be composed of seven members, who shall all be residents of this State. Two members shall have a paid work experience in audiology for at least five years and hold a North Carolina license as an audiologist. Two members shall have paid work experience in speech pathology for at least five years and hold a North Carolina license as a speech and language pathologist. One member shall be a physician who is licensed to practice medicine in the State of North Carolina. Two members shall be appointed by the Governor to represent the interest of the public at large. These two members shall be neither licensed speech and language pathologists nor audiologists. These members shall be appointed not later than July 1, 1981; one shall be initially appointed for a term of two years; the other shall be appointed for a term of three years. Thereafter all public members shall serve three-year terms.

(b) The members of the Board shall be appointed by the Governor.

(c) The initial Board shall have members appointed for terms of one year, two years, three years, four years, and five years. All board members serving on June 30, 1981, shall be eligible to complete their respective terms. No member appointed to a term on or after July 1, 1981, shall serve more than two complete consecutive three-year terms.

(d) Members of the Board shall receive no compensation for their service, but shall receive the same per diem, subsistence and travel allowance as provided in G.S. 138-5. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1981, c. 572, ss. 5, 6; 2007-436, s. 5.)

§ 90-304. Powers and duties of Board.

(a) The powers and duties of the Board are as follows:

- (1) To administer, coordinate, and enforce the provisions of this Article, establish fees, evaluate the qualifications of applicants, supervise the examination of applicants, and issue subpoenas, examine witnesses, and administer oaths, and investigate persons engaging in practices which violate the provisions of this Article.

- (2) To conduct hearings and keep records and minutes as necessary to an orderly dispatch of business.
- (3) To adopt responsible rules including rules that establish ethical standards of practice and require continuing professional education and to amend or repeal the same.
- (4) To issue annually a list stating the names of persons currently licensed under the provisions of this Article.
- (5) To employ such personnel as determined by its needs and budget.
- (6) To adopt seals by which it shall authenticate their proceedings, copies of the proceedings, records and the acts of the Board, and licenses.
- (7) To bring an action to restrain or enjoin violations of this Article in addition to and not in lieu of criminal prosecution or proceedings to revoke or suspend licenses issued under this Article.

(b) The Board shall not adopt or enforce any rule or regulation which prohibits advertising except for false or misleading advertising. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1981, c. 572, s. 7; 1987, c. 665, s. 10; 2007-436, s. 6.)

§ 90-305. Fees.

Persons subject to licensure under this Article shall pay fees to the Board not to exceed the following:

- (1) Application fee..... \$30.00
- (2) Examination fee..... 30.00
- (3) Initial license fee..... 100.00
- (4) Renewal license fee..... 100.00
- (5) Temporary license..... 40.00
- (6) Delinquency fee..... 25.00.

(1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 11; 2003-222, s. 1.)

§ 90-306. Penalty for violation.

Any person, partnership, or corporation who or which willfully violates the provisions of this Article shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1975, c. 773, s. 1; 1987, c. 665, s. 12; 1993, c. 539, s. 650; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 90-307. Severability.

If any part of this Article is for any reason held unconstitutional, inoperative, or void, such holding of invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions of the Article; and it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent to pass this Article without such unconstitutional, invalid, or inoperative part therein; and the remainder of this Article, after the exclusion of such part or parts, shall be valid as if such parts were not contained therein. (1975, c. 773, s. 1.)

§ 90-308: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 90-309: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 90-310: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 90-311: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 90-312: Reserved for future codification purposes.