



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS

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Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee
Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations
Office of State Budget & Management

Please accept this report created to comply with S.B. 704 SECTION 6.1.(d). This report includes information regarding the efforts made by the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists (NCBOESLPA) to exercise regulatory flexibility due to the impacts of the coronavirus.

The following allowances were made to aid with the well-being of the citizens and businesses of the State of North Carolina while under the impacts of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Crisis:

- The 30-day grace period under Article 22. Licensure Act for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists. § 90-300. "Renewal of Licenses", was extended to 90 days. Effective March 27, 2020.
- Electronic copies of clinical practicum summary sheets, required for temporary licensure, were accepted in lieu of hard copies. Effective March 27, 2020.
- Adopted Emergency Rule 21 NCAC 64. 0219, allowing Speech-Language Pathology Assistants to provide services via telepractice during this declared state of emergency. Effective March 27, 2020.
- In recognition of the COVID-19 crisis and due to the potential unavailability of the most secure platform, licensees were notified that they may follow HHS guidelines if more secure platforms cannot be reasonably accessed and if the licensee notifies and receives verbal consent from the patient or caretaker that the use of the platform may not be HIPAA compliant. The Board relaxed enforcement of non-HIPAA compliant platforms in the licensee's use of those platforms is done in good faith within the guidelines given above. Posted March 19, 2020.
- Intern students who were/are unable to attend their clinical work placements due to the outbreak of COVID-19 were/are allowed to obtain clinical hours to meet the requirements for the NCBOESLPA through; highly concentrated lectures with a required debriefing via video recording or virtual classroom (up to 21 hours this way); the limit for the number of simucase accepted was removed; standardized patients were/are accepted in place of actual patients. Effective March 24, 2020.
- Temporary licensees affected by the COVID-19 crisis by extending deadlines to allow them additional time to complete their supervised experience years. Effective March 27, 2020.
- Telesupervised hours were accepted in place of direct face-to-face hours of supervision for temporary licensees during their supervised experience year. Effective March 24, 2020.
- The Board relaxed the Clinical Fellowship work week to mirror the American Speech-Hearing-Language Association's (ASHA) work week and also accepts the COVID-19 allowances that ASHA currently has in place. Effective March 27, 2020.

- The Board accepted ASHA's requirements for the Clinical Fellowship Year in lieu of the NCBOESLPA's Supervised Experience Year to allow more flexibility and less confusion for temporary licensee's and their supervisors. Effective March 27, 2020.
- Adopted Emergency Rule 21 NCAC 64.0219 allowing Speech-Language Pathology Assistants to provide services via telepractice during this declared state of emergency. Effective March 27, 2020.
- The Board adopted emergency and temporary rules 21 NCAC 64 .1101, 21 NCAC 64 .1102, 21 NCAC 64 .1103, 21 NCAC 64 .1104, and 21 NCAC 64 .1105, outlining requirements for Audiology Assistants and a Waiver rule. This was necessary to allow Audiologists the ability to register Audiology Assistants. Effective April 24, 2020.
- The policy requiring that supervisors be within 50 miles of the SLP-Assistant during the workday was/is temporarily relaxed during the period of the COVID-19 crisis. Effective April 10, 2020.
- Pursuant to North Carolina Governor Cooper's Executive Order No. 130, Section 3, the NCBOESLPA allowed licensed providers in other states that do not currently hold a license in North Carolina to provide services to residents in North Carolina so long as their state licensure board has put forth allowances for them to do so as well. Effective April 8, 2020 and Posted May 29, 2020.
- The Board ceased enforcing 90-295 (a)(3) of Article 22 Licensure Act for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists requiring clinical hours for speech and language pathologists to be broken into specified areas. This is in line with the national association's requirements and is less burdensome for students and universities. Effective June 12, 2020.
- Audiology students who were not yet been able to sit for the Praxis exam were issued a temporary license to practice until they were/are able to provide a passing Praxis score, or until their temporary license expires. Effective May 29, 2020.
- Temporary licenses were extended to allow time for licensees to pass the Praxis examination. Minutes May 29, 2020.
- The Board ceased enforcing 90-295 (b)(4) of Article 22 Licensure Act for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists requiring clinical hours for audiologists to be broken into specified areas. This is in line with the national association's requirements and is less burdensome for students and universities. Effective July 10, 2020.
- Due to office processing and postal service delays, the office of the Board did not enforce the policy to hold hard copies of the renewed licenses for 10 days before mailing, when payments were made by check. Effective March 16, 2020.

If you require additional information, please contact me at the telephone number or email address listed at the top of this page.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline D. Brown
Executive Director