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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION**  
**BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY**  
**CHAPTER 115**

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Sections 40-1-70 and 40-67-70

- 115-1. General Licensing Provisions.
- 115-2. Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.
- 115-3. Supervised Professional Employment (SPE).

**Synopsis:**

The South Carolina Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology proposes to amend R.115-1, 115-2, and 115-3.

The Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* on August 27, 2021.

**Instructions:**

Replace regulation as shown below. All other items and sections remain unchanged.

**Text:**

ARTICLE 1

LICENSING PROVISIONS

**115-1. General Licensing Provisions.**

Each applicant for a license must submit a notarized application form to the board office. The appropriate fee must be received before the application may be evaluated.

(A) An applicant for active licensure in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology must submit or cause to be submitted documented evidence of the following:

(1) a diploma showing a post-graduate degree in speech-language pathology or audiology from a school or program with regional accreditation determined by the board to be equivalent to those accredited by the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) or other board approved authority;

(2) a passing score on a national examination as approved by the board; and

(3)(a) completed supervised professional employment (SPE); or

(b) meets ASHA's standards for Certificate of Clinical Competence or its equivalent as approved by the board, in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology in effect at the time of application; or

(c) have a current ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence or its equivalent as approved by the board.

(B) An applicant for active licensure in Audiology with a Masters in Audiology before January 1, 2007, must submit or cause to be submitted documented evidence of the following:

- (1) at least a masters degree in audiology or its equivalent from a school or program determined by the board to be equivalent to those accredited by the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA);
- (2) successful completion of a supervised clinical practicum approved by the board; and
- (3) successful completion of postgraduate professional experience approved by the board; or
- (4) meets ASHA's standards for Certificate of Clinical Competence or its equivalent as approved by the board.

(C) An applicant for active licensure in Audiology with a Doctorate in Audiology after January 1, 2007, must submit or cause to be submitted documented evidence of the following:

- (1) a doctoral degree in audiology from a school or educational institution with regional accreditation determined by the board to be equivalent to those accredited by the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) for Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA); or
- (2) meets ASHA's standards for Certificate of Clinical Competence or its equivalent as approved by the board.

(D) An applicant for a speech-language pathology or audiology intern license must submit or cause to be submitted documented evidence of having satisfied the requirement of (A)(1).

- (1) A speech-language pathology or audiology intern license must be issued to an applicant who has satisfied the requirement of subsection (A)(1) but who has not passed the examination required by subsection (A)(2) or who lacks the supervised professional employment as required by subsection (A)(3), or both.

- (2) A person who has been issued a license as an intern who has not met the requirement of subsection (A)(2) must pass an examination approved by the board within twelve months of the issuance of the intern license.

(E) An applicant whose license is expired must submit a new application for licensure along with the required fee, provide evidence of continuing education earned within the last two years (16 hours for a speech-language pathologist or audiologist and 8 hours for a speech-language pathologist assistant), and meet all licensure requirements in effect at the time of said application.

#### 115-2. Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.

(A) To be licensed as a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant an applicant must:

- (1) submit an application on forms approved by the board;
- (2) submit an application fee as prescribed by the board;
- (3) present evidence of a bachelor's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from a regionally accredited institution; and
- (4) present evidence of a supervised clinical experience that consists of 100 clock hours of supervised clinical fieldwork with direct client contact/clinical practicum that meets the requirements in (C).

(B) A bachelor's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from a regionally accredited institution must include as a minimum the following core curriculum of 36 semester hours:

(1)	Basic Area	
	Anatomy, physiology, mechanics, and function of the ear and vocal mechanism.	
	Semantics	
	Speech and Voice Science	
	Psychology of Speech	
	Introduction to Phonetics	
(2)	Speech-Language Pathology Courses	(12 Semester Hours)
	Stuttering	
	Articulation	
	Voice Disorders	
	Cleft Palate	
	Aphasia	

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	Cerebral Palsy	
	Speech-Language Disorders	
	Neurogenics	
(3)	Audiology	(3 Semester Hours)
	Testing of Hearing	
	Introduction to Audiology	
	Auditory Training	
	Speechreading	
	Speech for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing	
(4)	Psychology	(6 Semester Hours)
	Human Growth and Development	
	Psychology of Adjustment or	
	Abnormal Psychology	
(5)	Basic Course in Public Speaking	(3 Semester Hours)

### (C) Supervised Clinical Experience.

(1) Observation hours cannot be used to satisfy the required 100 hours of clinical fieldwork.  
 (2) Hours must be completed before the speech-language pathology assistant license can be issued by the Board.

(3) The supervised clinical experience may be obtained as follows:

- (a) as part of an academic program that is acceptable to the Board; or
- (b) an on-the-job training/work program completed in another state in accordance with that state's laws;

or

(c) completion within a four (4) month period of a Board-approved plan to fulfill the 100 clinical clock hours under the supervision of a South Carolina licensed speech-language pathologist subject to the following:

- (i) The plan to obtain the 100 clinical clock hours must be on a Board-approved form signed by the applicant and the South Carolina licensed speech-language pathologist providing the supervision; and
- (ii) The plan must be submitted with a completed application for speech-language pathology assistant licensure that includes all required documentation; and
- (iii) The plan must be approved by the Board before the applicant begins the clinical clock hours; and
- (iv) If the plan is not completed within the four (4) month period, the applicant must submit a new plan to be approved by the Board.

(4) Applicant may submit an ASHA Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Certification as evidence of the 100 clinical clock hours obtained under (3)(a) or (3)(b).

(5) Family members or individuals related to an applicant may not serve as clinical supervisors.

### (D) General Guidelines.

(1) No speech-language pathology assistant may begin working in direct contact with clients/patients without the board's written approval of the supervisory agreement and on the job training plan.

(2) Only a speech-language pathologist with an active license in good standing and a minimum of three years of work experience may supervise speech-language pathology assistants.

(3) A speech-language pathologist shall supervise no more than two full-time or three part-time speech-language pathology assistants, not to exceed more than three speech-language pathology assistants whether part-time or full-time. Full time is defined as a minimum of 30 work hours per week.

(4) If, for any reason, there is a change in supervising speech-language pathologist, it is the responsibility of the supervising speech-language pathologist to notify the board in writing within seven (7) working days that the supervisory agreement has been discontinued.

(5) The assistant's license shall become void when the authorized supervisor is no longer available for supervision. The license will be reactivated upon receipt and approval by the board of a new supervisory agreement and the change in supervising speech-language pathologist fee specified in Reg. 10-41(E).

(6) At the time of license renewal, supervising speech-language pathologists are to list the names of all those speech-language pathology assistants they are supervising.

(7) A speech-language pathology assistant may work part-time for more than one supervising speech-language pathologist provided that the board has approved supervisory agreements for each supervising speech-language pathologist.

(8) A licensed speech-language pathologist who supervises any speech-language pathology assistant must provide each speech-language pathology assistant with on the job training and must maintain responsibility for all services performed or omitted by such speech-language pathology assistant(s).

**(E) On-the-Job Training (OJT).**

At a minimum, on-the-job training (OJT) must include step-by-step instruction of each and every service or task the speech-language pathology assistant is to perform and continuous visual observation by the supervising speech-language pathologist of the speech-language pathology assistant's performance of each service or task until the supervising speech-language pathologist establishes the speech-language pathology assistant's competence. The supervising speech-language pathologist must maintain a written record of each service or task indicating the activity, date, time, and location of the training demonstration and observations. This record must be signed by both the supervising speech-language pathologist and the speech-language pathology assistant and a copy must be provided to the speech-language pathology assistant. The supervising speech-language pathologist and the speech-language pathology assistant must maintain such records for a period of four (4) years and such records must be made available to the director or the designee upon request.

**(F) Supervision - General.**

Supervising speech-language pathologists are responsible for all the clinical services provided or omitted by the speech-language pathology assistant(s). When speech-language pathology assistants provide direct services, the supervising speech-language pathologist is responsible for informing, in writing, all the clients (or their legal guardians), referring agencies, and third-party payers. Further, it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the assistant is clearly identified at all times as an assistant by means of a name tag or similar identification. At no time may a speech-language pathology assistant perform tasks when the supervising speech-language pathologist cannot be reached by personal contact, phone, e-mail, pager, or other immediate or electronic means. The supervisor must make provisions, in writing, for emergency situations including designation of another licensed speech-language pathologist who has agreed to be available on an as needed basis to provide supervision and consultation to the assistant when the supervisor is not available. If for any reason (i.e., maternity leave, illness, change of job) a supervisor is not able to provide the level of supervision stipulated, the assistant may not perform client contact tasks.

**(G) Direct Supervision.**

Following initial OJT, direct supervision of each speech-language pathology assistant must consist of a minimum of one of every seven therapy sessions per patient of direct, visual supervision of client contact to include a sampling of each assigned service or task. This direct supervision must be on-site, in person, and documented in writing. This documentation must be maintained by the supervising speech-language pathologist for a period of four years and must be made available to the director or the designee upon request.

**(H) Indirect Supervision.**

In addition to direct supervision, indirect supervision is required a minimum of 5% (e.g., 2 hours per 40 hour work week) and must include review of written records and may include demonstrations, review and evaluation of audio- or video- taped sessions, and/or supervisory conferences.

**(I) Quarterly Reviews.**

In addition to direct and indirect supervision, the supervising speech-language pathologist must conduct quarterly performance reviews of each speech-language pathology assistant's performance of each assigned service or task. Such quarterly reviews must document, on a form approved by the board, direct observation of each task or service assigned to the speech-language pathology assistant. These reviews must be signed by both the supervising speech-language pathologist and the speech-language pathology assistant and must be maintained by the supervising speech-language pathologist for a period of four (4) years and must be made available to the director or the designee upon request.

**(J) Scope of Practice.**

The supervising speech-language pathologist accepts full and complete responsibility for all services and tasks performed or omitted by the speech-language pathology assistant. Provided that education, training, supervision

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and documentation are consistent with that defined in this chapter, the following tasks may be designated to the speech-language pathology assistant:

- (1) Conduct speech-language or hearing screenings (without interpretation) following specified screening protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (2) Provide direct treatment assistance to patients/clients identified by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (3) Follow documented treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (4) Document patient/client progress toward meeting established objectives as stated in the treatment plan.
- (5) Assist the supervising speech-language pathologist during assessment of patients/clients.
- (6) Assist with tallying patient/client responses, prepare therapy materials, schedule activities, prepare charts and assist with other clerical tasks as directed by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (7) Perform checks and maintenance of equipment on a regular basis, and verified calibration at least annually on audiometric equipment.
- (8) Assist the supervising speech-language pathologist in research projects, in-service training and public relations programs.
- (9) Sign treatment notes which must be reviewed and co-signed by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (10) Discuss with the client, the guardian or family members specifically observed behaviors that have occurred during treatment when such behaviors are supported by documented objective data.

### (K) Prohibited Activities.

The speech-language pathology assistant must not:

- (1) Perform diagnostic tests of any kind, formal or informal evaluations, or interpret test results.
- (2) Participate in parent conferences, case conferences, or any interdisciplinary team meetings where diagnostic information is interpreted or treatment plans developed without the presence of the supervising speech-language pathologist or designated licensed speech-language pathologist.
- (3) Provide patient/client or family counseling.
- (4) Write, develop, or modify a patient/client's treatment plan in any way.
- (5) Assist with patients/clients without following a documented treatment plan which has been prepared by a licensed speech-language pathologist and for which the speech-language pathology assistant has not received appropriately documented OJT.
- (6) Sign any formal documents (e.g., treatment plans, reimbursement forms or reports) without the signature of the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (7) Select patients/clients for services.
- (8) Discharge patients/clients from services.
- (9) Disclose clinical or confidential information either orally or in writing to any one not designated in writing by the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (10) Make referrals for additional services.
- (11) Provide any interpretation or elaboration of information that is contained in reports written by any licensed speech-language pathologist.
- (12) Represent oneself to be a speech-language pathologist.
- (13) Make advertisement or public announcement of services independent of the supervising speech-language pathologist.
- (14) Participate in feeding or swallowing activities as set forth in the ASHA Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice.
- (15) Treat a person who is medically fragile as defined by the ASHA Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice.

### 115-3. Supervised Professional Employment (SPE).

(A) Supervised professional employment (SPE), as required by the board, means direct clinical work with patients, consultations, record keeping, or any other duties relevant to a bona fide program of clinical work. It is expected, however, that a significant amount of clinical experience will be in direct clinical contact with persons who have communication disorders. Time spent in supervision of students, academic teaching, and research, as

well as any administrative activity that does not deal directly with management programs of specific patients or clients will not count toward completion of the SPE.

(B) The SPE, whether or not for wages or other compensation, should consist of not less than 1,260 hours and must be completed within one (1) year or less from the date that it begins unless renewed in accordance with statute:

(1) Full-time experience is considered a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week. However, working more than thirty-five (35) hours per week will not shorten the length of the SPE, which must be for a period of at least nine months (35 hours per week for 9 months = 1,260 hours); and

(2) Part-time experience may be applied towards satisfying the SPE provided that it is a minimum of five (5) hours per week and will extend the number of weeks required to reach 1,260 hours.

In the event that part-time employment is used to fulfill a portion of the SPE, one hundred (100%) percent of the minimum hour requirements for part-time work must be spent in direct professional employment as defined in subsection (A).

(C) SPE supervision must entail the personal and direct involvement of the supervisor in observations of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures that will permit the SPE supervisor to monitor, improve and evaluate the intern's performance in professional clinical employment. The supervision must include on-site observations of the intern. Other monitoring activities such as conferences with the intern, evaluation of written reports, and evaluation by professional colleagues may be executed by correspondence. The intern's supervisor must base the total evaluation on no fewer than thirty-six (36) monitored activities (a minimum of four hours per month). The monitoring activities must include at least eighteen (18) on-site observations (a minimum of two hours each month). Should a supervisor suspect at any time during the SPE that an intern will not meet the requirements of this section, the supervisor must counsel the intern both orally and in writing and maintain carefully written records of all contacts and conferences in the ensuing months.

(D) Within one month of completion of the SPE, the supervisor must conduct a formal evaluation of the intern's performance and submit the evaluation to the board. Such evaluation must be completed on a form approved by the board, must be signed and dated by both the intern and the supervisor, and must include a recommendation by the supervisor that in his opinion the intern either is or is not qualified for full licensure.

(E) The SPE supervisor shall only supervise no more than three (3) total of either interns and/or speech-language pathology assistants at one time.

(F) In order to serve as an SPE supervisor, the licensee must have a minimum of three years of full-time licensed work experience which may include an internship or other mentored professional experience that follows completion of the post-graduate degree.

#### **Fiscal Impact Statement:**

There will be no cost incurred by the State or any of its political subdivisions for these regulations.

#### **Statement of Rationale:**

The updated regulation, R.115-1, would add Section (E) which would identify the requirements for an applicant to reinstate an expired license in accordance with S.C. Code Section 40-67-270. The updated regulation, R.115-2, would revise the requirements of Supervised Clinical Experience for Speech Language Pathology Assistants, to allow experience to be obtained as part of an academic program acceptable to the Board, as on-the-job training completed in another state in accordance with that state's laws, or completed within a four-month period of a Board-approved plan under the supervision of a state-licensed speech-language pathologist. It would also clarify the requirements for Direct Supervision and add two activities that are prohibited from being performed by speech-language pathology assistants: participating in feeding or swallowing activities as set forth in the ASHA Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice; and treating a person who is medically fragile as defined by the ASHA Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Scope of Practice. The updated regulation, R.115-3, would clarify the requirements for full-time and part-time employment for purposes of a Supervised Professional Employment and clarify the requirements for serving as a supervisor.