

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Health Care Committee

BILL: SB 370

INTRODUCER: Senator Peaden

SUBJECT: Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

DATE: December 20, 2005

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Munroe	Wilson	HE	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	ED	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill revises requirements for the Department of Health (DOH) to issue a provisional license or license in speech-language pathology or audiology. Applicants must complete academic requirements from an institution that is, or at the time that the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the successor to CHEA, or the United States Department of Education. The bill updates the academic and clinical requirements for applicants seeking provisional licensure or licensure that were linked to the 1993 certificate of clinical competence issued by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association to reflect changes in the academic and clinical requirements for accreditation. The Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (board) is authorized to waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant who has received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements, passes the examination in speech-language pathology or audiology, as applicable, and meets other requirements.

Effective January 1, 2008, applicants for licensure in audiology must have earned a doctoral degree in audiology and applicants for provisional licensure in audiology must have earned a doctoral degree in audiology but not have passed the license examination required for a license in audiology, or have completed the academic requirement of a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in audiology. An applicant for provisional licensure or licensure in audiology has the option to have earned a master's degree with a major emphasis in audiology, which was conferred before January 1, 2008, and such applicants may continue to be eligible for provisional licensure until 2013.

Professional employment experience requirements for speech-language pathology and audiology license applicants are revised to require such applicants to demonstrate, prior to licensure, full-time or equivalent part-time professional employment experience. Speech-language pathology applicants must obtain 9 months of full-time or equivalent part-time professional employment. Audiology applicants must obtain 11 months of such full-time employment or its equivalent.

The bill revises the licensure by endorsement provisions to allow the board to certify as qualified for a license a speech-language pathologist or audiologist who holds a valid certificate of clinical competence of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association or board certification in audiology from the American Board of Audiology. Speech-language pathology or audiology licensure applicants must satisfy supervised clinical requirements rather than supervised clinical “clock hour” requirements.

The bill revises certification requirements for an audiology assistant to require applicants to earn a high school diploma instead of the current statutory requirements that require applicants to complete at least 24 semester hours of coursework as approved by the board at an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA.

An audiologist or speech-language pathologist who employs a speech-language assistant or audiology assistant must provide the assistant with a plan approved by the board for on-the-job training and must maintain responsibility for all services performed by the assistant.

This bill substantially amends sections 468.1155, 468.1165, 468.1185, and 468.1215, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Pt. I, ch. 468, F.S., governs the practice of speech-language pathology and audiology by the board in DOH. The part provides requirements for provisional licensure and licensure for persons to practice speech-language pathology and audiology in Florida, including education, professional employment experience, practicum, and examination. A provisional license is required for each applicant who cannot document 9 months of supervised professional employment experience and a passing score on the national examination. The department must issue a provisional license to practice speech-language pathology to an applicant who has received a master’s degree or is currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in speech-language pathology at an institution of higher learning that is, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Similarly, an applicant seeking a provisional license in audiology must have received a master’s degree or be currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in audiology at an institution of higher learning that is, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

The part requires persons seeking provisional licensure and licensure in speech-language pathology or audiology to obtain 60 semester hours of specified coursework and 300 supervised

clinical clock hours, which are comparable to the 1993 academic and clinical requirements for the certificate of competence issued by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. The board must certify for licensure any applicant who has satisfied the education and supervised clinical clock hour requirements for provisional licensure, completed the 9 months of supervised professional experience, and passed the required licensure examination pertinent to the license being sought. In addition, the board must certify as qualified for licensure by endorsement any applicant who holds a valid license or certificate in another state or territory of the United States if the criteria for issuance of the license were substantially equivalent to or more stringent than those in Florida at the time the license was issued or to any applicant who has received the certificate of clinical competence of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association. The part provides certification requirements for speech-language pathology assistants and audiology assistants.

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association provides voluntary certification for speech-language pathologists and audiologists. In 1997, the American Board for Audiology was founded to provide voluntary board certification for audiologists. The American Speech-Language Hearing Association has provided academic accreditation for speech-language pathology and audiology university programs through the Council for Academic Accreditation (CAA). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognizes CAA. The CAA has received continuous recognition as an accrediting agency from the United States Department of Education since 1967. A relatively new accrediting body, the Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education, is in its third year of development.

Frequent changes in the academic and clinical requirements for accreditation have led to the need for revisions of the speech-language pathology and audiology practice act. The Educational Testing Service completed national skills validation studies for both professions and concluded that the knowledge and skills of practitioners must be expanded to assure good quality care to the persons both professions serve. The audiology profession will transition to a doctoral degree entry, with expanded educational requirements by January 1, 2007. Speech-language pathology will remain at the master's degree entry-level for clinical practice, also with expanded knowledge and skills and competency-based assessment effective January 1, 2005.

Florida universities were the first in the nation to transition all accredited university training programs to the Doctor of Audiology degree (Aud). The University of Florida, University of South Florida, and Nova Southeastern University are the only universities in Florida with audiology programs and each offer the Doctor of Audiology degree. The programs at UF and USF were approved by the former Florida Board of Regents, which recommended approval of the Doctor of Audiology degree programs to the State Legislature. The CAA, which accredits audiology programs, will no longer accredit any audiology programs at the master's degree level after December 1, 2006. Speech-language pathology master's degree programs in Florida meet the new accreditation standards that became effective January 1, 2005.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. Amends s. 468.1155, F.S., relating to requirements for a provisional license to practice speech-language pathology or audiology, to require a provisional license for all applicants for a license in speech-language pathology who cannot document a minimum of 9

months of supervised professional employment experience. A provisional license is required for applicants for a license in audiology who cannot document a minimum of 11 months of supervised clinical experience.

The requirements for a provisional license in speech-language pathology are also revised to require applicants to have received a master's degree or have completed the academic requirement of, rather than being enrolled in, a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in speech-language pathology from an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or its successor, the United States Department of Education, or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Applicants from programs outside of the United States or Canada must document equivalency of the program. Applicants must have completed the program requirements by academic coursework, practicum experience, or laboratory or research activity, as verified by the program, including knowledge of specified subjects, which are comparable to the academic requirements for the certificate of clinical competence in speech-language pathology issued by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association.

The bill eliminates the academic and clinical requirements for the provisional license in speech-language pathology that include 60 semester hours of coursework and 300 supervised clinical clock hours, which are comparable to the 1993 voluntary certificate of clinical competency in speech-language pathology. The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements, passes the examination in speech-language pathology, and meets other requirements established by rule of the board.

Effective January 1, 2008, the requirements for a person to receive a provisional license in audiology are revised to require the applicant to have earned a doctoral degree in audiology, but not have passed the license examination required for a license in audiology, or have completed the academic requirement of a doctoral degree program with a major emphasis in audiology from an institution that is, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated was, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or its successor or the United States Department of Education, or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. An applicant for a provisional license in audiology who graduated from or is currently enrolled in a university or college program located outside the United States or Canada must present documentation that the program is equivalent. The bill eliminates the academic and clinical requirements for the provisional license in audiology that include 60 semester hours of coursework and 300 supervised clinical clock hours, which are comparable to the 1993 voluntary certificate of clinical competency in audiology. In lieu of those requirements, an applicant for a provisional license in audiology must have completed the academic and clinical requirements of a program that assures that the student obtained:

- Knowledge of foundation areas of basic body systems and processes relating to hearing and balance;
- Skills for the diagnosis, management, and treatment of auditory and vestibular or balance conditions and diseases;
- The ability to effectively communicate with patients and other health care professionals;

- Knowledge of professional ethical systems as they relate to the practice of audiology; and
- Clinical experiences that encompass the entire scope of practice and focus on the most current evidence-based practice.

The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant for a provisional license in audiology who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements, passes the examination in audiology, and meets other requirements established by rule of the board.

The bill permits applicants to obtain provisional licensure in audiology if they have earned a master's degree with a major emphasis in audiology which was conferred before January 1, 2008, from an institution of higher learning which was, or at the time the applicant was enrolled and graduated, accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA or its successor, the United States Department of Education, or from an institution that is a member in good standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. An applicant for a provisional license in audiology who graduated from or is currently enrolled in a university or college program located outside the United States or Canada must present documentation that the program is equivalent to standards established by an accrediting body recognized by CHEA or its successor or the United States Department of Education in order to obtain a provisional license. The board may waive the requirements for education, practicum, and professional employment experience for an applicant who received a professional education in another country if the board is satisfied that the applicant meets the equivalent education and practicum requirements, passes the examination in audiology, and meets other requirements established by rule of the board. The provision authorizing the issuance of a provisional license to graduates of a master's degree program in audiology expires on January 1, 2013.

Section 2. Amends s. 468.1165, F.S., relating to professional employment experience requirements for speech-language pathology and audiology licensure applicants, to require such applicants to demonstrate, prior to licensure, a minimum period of full-time or equivalent part-time professional employment experience, pertinent to the license being sought. Applicants for the speech-language pathologist license must demonstrate a minimum of 9 months of full-time professional employment, or the equivalent in part-time professional employment. Applicants for the audiology license must demonstrate 11 months of full-time professional employment, or the equivalent in part-time professional employment.

Section 3. Amends s. 468.1185, F.S., relating to speech-language pathology or audiology licensure, to eliminate requirements for applicants to satisfy supervised clinical clock hour requirements. The bill specifies that an applicant for an audiologist license who has obtained a doctoral degree in audiology has satisfied the education, supervised clinical requirements, and professional experience requirements for licensure. The licensure by endorsement provisions are revised to allow the board to certify as qualified for a license a speech-language pathologist or audiologist who holds a valid certificate of clinical competence of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association or board certification in audiology from the American Board of Audiology.

Section 4. Amends s. 468.1215, F.S., relating to certification requirements for speech-language pathology assistants and audiology assistants, to revise requirements for audiology assistants to require applicants to earn a high school diploma instead of the current statutory requirements that require applicants to complete at least 24 semester hours of coursework as approved by the board at an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by CHEA.

An audiologist or speech-language pathologist who employs a speech-language assistant or audiology assistant must provide the assistant with a plan approved by the board for on-the-job training and must maintain responsibility for all services performed by the assistant.

References in the section to supervised clock hours are deleted and replaced with supervised clinical experience to conform to changes in the provisional licensure requirements for audiologists.

Section 5. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2006.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on municipalities and the counties under the requirements of Article VII, Section 18 of the Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on public records or open meetings issues under the requirements of Article I, Section 24(a) and (b) of the Florida Constitution.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

The provisions of this bill have no impact on the trust fund restrictions under the requirements of Article III, Subsection 19(f) of the Florida Constitution.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health may incur costs relating to rulemaking under the bill. Such costs are expected to be minimal.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
