

MICHIGAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP) LICENSING GUIDE FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated speech-language pathologist must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background on the larger speech-language profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROFESSION

The practice of speech-language pathology in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Board of Speech-Language Pathology. You must be licensed to practice as a speech-language pathologist (SLP) in Michigan.

The guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. master's or doctoral degree in speech-language pathology and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. speech-language pathologist license. As a foreign-educated SLP, you are required to first have your speech-language pathologist education evaluated by a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) agency. This list can be located at <http://www.asha.org/certification/CredEval/>. The credentialing agency will also verify knowledge of the English language with a Toefl or Toefl-ibt.

You will become a Speech-Language Pathologist through Licensure by Examination. The Praxis exam is administered at www.ets.org/praxis. For international test takers, you will need to take your exam at a Prometric center and need to contact praxis@ets.org

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

OVERVIEW

Internationally educated Speech-Language Pathologist's need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination as a SLP in Michigan.

I. EVALUATE YOUR FOREIGN DEGREE

LARA requires that you have your foreign speech-language pathology degree evaluated using a NACES association.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) directs you on the steps necessary to evaluate your foreign degree and licensure. Here are the steps:

- Select an agency off the NACES list
- Apply and pay online for the educational credentials review service
- Make sure that you ask for your report to be prepared for the Michigan Board of Speech Language Pathology as this will make your record available to the State electronically
- If your speech language pathology education was not taught in English, your report will include a determination of English language proficiency as tested on the TOEFL examination.

If your degree is not deemed equivalent to a U.S. degree, you will be provided information about the courses or subject areas in which you are deficient. If the Educational Credentials Review results in your education being found "not equivalent", you may apply to for a re-evaluation of your educational credentials after submitting additional information about your education. You must work directly with your selected credentialing agency in correcting any deficiencies in your report; the Michigan Board of Speech Language Pathology has no role in the re-evaluation process.

II. SUBMIT YOUR LICENSURE APPLICATION, REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, AND PAY APPLICATION FEE

Your application sent to the Michigan Board of Speech Language Pathology should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from www.michigan.gov/healthlicense
- Fee: paid by a check or money order drawn on a U.S. financial institution and made payable to the State of Michigan
- A course-by-course credential evaluation completed by an agency that is a member of NACES showing your educational program was substantially equivalent to a CAA-accredited program
- An applicant whose SLP education program was taught in a language other than English shall satisfactorily complete the TOEFL or the TOEFLibt
- Verify completion of at least 9 months (1,260 hours) of supervised post-graduate clinical experience in speech-language pathology
- Contact ETS and have your PRAXIS Series II test in Speech-Language Pathology score report send to the Michigan board using recipient code 7430
- Fingerprint/Criminal Background Check report

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not met all licensing requirements within these 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the processing fee again.

III. GET FINGERPRINTED VIA A MICHIGAN-APPROVED VENDOR FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Directions for completing the fingerprint requirement are mailed to you from the Department upon receipt of your application.

3. TESTS

To become a licensed SLP in Michigan, you must take and pass the PRAXIS exam.

The Speech-Language Pathology Praxis exam consists of 132 multiple choice and fill in the blank questions. You have a total of 150 minutes to complete this exam. The passing score on the exam is 162 (test scores are reported on a scale of 100-200).

CONTENT AREAS OF THE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY EXAM

The content of the PRAXIS measures knowledge important for independent practice as a speech-language pathologist in all primary employment settings, including schools, hospitals, clinics, private practice, etc. The 132 selected-response test questions assess foundational knowledge, knowledge of professional practice, and specialized knowledge as it is applied across practice ranging from screening and assessment to treatment and treatment evaluation. The percentages show the approximate percent of questions each test taker will receive in the category:

1. Foundations and Professional Practice (33.3%)
2. Screening, Assessment, Evaluation and Diagnosis (33.3%)
3. Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation of Treatment (33.3%)

SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE PRAXIS SERIES II SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY EXAM

Praxis tests are delivered by computer at an international network of testing centers that include Prometric test centers, universities and other locations. You will need to schedule your exam and testing location at www.ets.org/praxis.

On the day of the test you must bring your admission ticket and acceptable form of identification. Acceptable ID is a currently valid, government-issued photo ID (passport, driver's license, etc.). You should arrive at least a half hour early; you will not be allowed to take the test if you arrive more than fifteen minutes late for your appointment. You will have up to 150 minutes to complete the test.

FAILING THE PRAXIS

All test takers have access to their test scores via their Praxis account. If you fail the Praxis exam you will need to re-register and take the exam again prior to having your scores sent to the Michigan Board.

PRACTICING FOR THE PRAXIS

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer-based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available for low cost. ETS offers a Study Companion at no charge and an Interactive Practice Exam that is available through their website for a fee. Consider investing in test preparation as it may save you money by not having to pay to retake the test and by entering the job market faster.

4. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as a speech-language pathologist.

Preparing for the Praxis Exam can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as

- employers paying for tuition and fees associated with the Praxis and licensing
- more energy to focus on studying
- a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans. You may find some employers have benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY EDUCATIONAL LIMITED

The educational limited speech-language pathologist license is for individuals who will be completing 9 months of post-graduate supervised clinical experience in Michigan. This license also requires a credential review from NACES for your master's or doctoral degree program.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

5. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Speech-Language Pathologists must renew their license every 2 years. Licenses expire on September 30th every two years. LARA sends a notice reminding you to renew your license, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department. You must renew online. The cost to renew on time is \$151.50. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to September 30. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

Every time you renew your license you must state that you have met the 20 continuous professional development credit (cpd) requirement in order to renew your license. You are also required to complete training in identifying victims of human trafficking. You need to keep this information on file in case you are audited. There are many opportunities to earn these credits, but special rules apply. You should check the LARA websites for

details, or consider joining a professional association that offers CPD opportunities to members.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY CPD REQUIREMENTS

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan does not have any shared agreement to honor the speech-language pathologist licenses of other states. It grants licensing to speech-language pathologist's by either examination (the process described in this topic) or endorsement (where a speech-language pathologist licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing). Fortunately, since ASHA is accepted by all states, a speech-language pathologist looking to relocate to Michigan will not have to retake the Praxis exam.

6. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) issues licenses for Speech-Language Pathologist's. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. The page that specifically concerns speech-language pathology: http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_53664---,00.html includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909 Telephone Number 517-335-0918; Fax: 517-373-1044 Email: bplhelp@michigan.gov
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions including can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>;
- The administrative rules governing speech-language pathology practice in Michigan can be located at:

http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=LR&Level_1=Bureau+of+Professional+Licensing

CREDENTIAL REVIEW AGENCIES

- National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)
www.naces.org/

TESTING

- Educational Testing Services www.ets.org/praxis