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## Registration Requirements

Under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA), the College has the legislated responsibility to establish, maintain and enforce standards for registration. In meeting this requirement, the College establishes the requirements for entry into the profession. Sections 28 – 32 of the HPA state the basic requirements for all regulated health professions related to applying for registration. This includes the type of information that must be submitted by an applicant, college processes upon receipt of an application, decisions on applications, review processes, and appeals on registration decisions.

The specific requirements that must be met for registration for a particular profession are stated in the Regulation for that profession. The *Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologist Profession Regulation* (Regulation) states the specific requirements for registration as a speech-language pathologist (SLP) or audiologist in Alberta. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Education; an applicant for registration as a regulated SLP or audiologist must have obtained a minimum of a Master's degree from an education program that is approved by ACSLPA Council. Education programs that are approved by Council include those from accredited universities in Canada. Applicants who have completed their education program outside of Canada are individually assessed to determine if their qualifications are recognized as being substantially equivalent.
- To demonstrate current qualifications, an applicant must have completed their education program or approved refresher education within 3 years of the date that a complete application is received by the Registrar, or have practiced as an SLP or audiologist for at least 1250 hours in the 5 years immediately preceding their application.

- All applicants for registration must provide evidence of having good character and reputation. The Regulation states that this may be in the form of written references, declarations regarding professional conduct and convictions of criminal offences, or other evidence as requested. One of the specific ways in which ACSLPA applicants are required to provide evidence of having good character and reputation is by providing a satisfactory Police Information Check, including a Vulnerable Sector Check, or equivalent.
- All applicants for registration must provide evidence of having the type and amount of professional liability insurance required by Council.
- All SLPs and audiologists must be sufficiently proficient in the English language and may be required to provide evidence of their proficiency to provide professional services in English.

Details regarding each of these requirements is provided in the “ACSLPA Registration Standards and Guidelines”, available on the ACSLPA website.

Registration with ACSLPA assures the public and employers that an individual has met the standards required to practice as an SLP or audiologist in Alberta.

## Mandatory Registration

Under the HPA, there is a uniform, mandatory requirement to register with the College if certain circumstances exist. Section 46(1) states the following:

*“A person must apply for registration if the person*

- a) is qualified to meet the requirements of section 28(2) for registration as a regulated member, and*
- b) intends to provide any or all of the following:*
  - i. professional services directly to the public.....*
  - iv. the teaching of the practice of a regulated profession to regulated members or students of the regulated profession;*
  - v. the supervision of regulated members who provide professional services to the public”.*

Simply put, by law, a person who meets the educational requirements to practice as an SLP or audiologist, and intends to provide any professional services as described in the Practice Statement for that profession, must be registered with ACSLPA. This requirement is regardless of whether an individual engages in paid employment or volunteers, or practices in a full time, part time or casual basis.

If the Registrar of the College is of the opinion that an individual who is not a regulated member of ACSLPA meets the requirements to practice as an SLP or audiologist and is providing professional services as described in the Practice Statement for that profession, the Registrar may provide that

person with a written request to apply for registration. Under the HPA, a person who meets the requirements to practice their profession and does not comply with the request of the Registrar to apply for registration is guilty of an offence and may be subject to a fine and possible imprisonment.

Section 48 of the HPA also prohibits anyone from knowingly employing an individual who is required to be registered with the College and is not registered. Such a person is also guilty of an offence and may be subject to a fine and possible imprisonment.

Any regulated member who is aware of an individual who meets the requirements to practice as an SLP or audiologist and whose work falls within the Practice Statement of their profession, and who is not registered with ACSLPA, should report this matter to the College. To confirm if an individual is registered, check the General Register on the ACSLPA website.

## College Registers

In accordance with the requirements of the *HPA*, ACSLPA maintains a number of member registers.

The **General Register** lists those SLPs and audiologists who are entitled to practice and use the protected titles of their profession in Alberta. The General Register is always current and is available on the ACSLPA website, allowing anyone to verify who is registered to practice as an SLP or audiologist in Alberta. The use of the terms “Registered Speech-Language Pathologist” or “Registered Audiologist” informs colleagues, clients and members of the public that the professional has the required education and skills to practice competently, and is registered with the College.

The **Courtesy Register** allows practitioners registered in another regulated jurisdiction (in another province or in the US, for example) to be registered in Alberta for a short term. These members may be providing professional services in Alberta for one or more of the following purposes:

- Conducting a training course or clinical presentation at an approved teaching site;
- Conducting or engaging in a research program;
- Conducting or engaging in an accreditation program;
- Demonstrating equipment or techniques in direct clinical care;
- Completing on-the-job training for the purpose of developing specific skills or competencies;
- Providing short term SLP or audiology services for the purpose of ensuring continuity of care for a client travelling or returning to Alberta if treatment was started in a home jurisdiction;
- Providing short term SLP or audiology services to ensure continuity of care through an employer that provides services in multiple jurisdictions, if the Alberta SLP or audiologist is temporarily unavailable; or
- Providing short term specialist services if no local SLP or audiologist with the necessary competencies is available to provide services in a reasonable timeframe or within reasonable geographic proximity to the client.

- A specific interjurisdictional memorandum of understanding with British Columbia has also been developed whereby individuals registered in good standing in BC may provide up to a maximum of 100 hours of virtual or face-to-face care in Alberta as a courtesy registrant.

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Courtesy registration is granted for only the time period necessary to complete the purpose for which the courtesy registration is granted, for an aggregate of no more than a 12 month period. While on the Courtesy Register, an individual may practice as an SLP or audiologist and use the protected titles of their profession. Full details regarding Courtesy Registration are available on the ACSLPA website.

The **Non-Practicing Register** includes members who are not currently engaged in active professional practice, as is often the case when a member takes a temporary leave from practice. For example, members often choose to change their status to Non-Practicing while on maternity or paternity leave. Individuals with Non-Practicing status may not practice as an SLP or audiologist; however, they are allowed to use their protected titles followed by the term “Non-Practicing” in parentheses.

The HPA states the information that a college must record for each regulated member in the appropriate register. This includes the following:

- the full name of the regulated member; the name of a regulated member must be the same name that they use in their practice. This allows members of the public, insurance companies and others to verify that an SLP or audiologist is registered and entitled to practice.
- the regulated member’s unique registration number;
- whether the regulated member’s registration is restricted to a period of time and, if so, the period of time;
- any conditions imposed on the regulated member’s practice permit;
- the status of the regulated member’s practice permit, including whether it is suspended or cancelled;
- the regulated member’s practice specialization recognized by the College;
- whether the regulated member is authorized to provide a restricted activity not normally provided by regulated members of the College; and
- whether the regulated member is not authorized to provide a restricted activity that is normally provided by regulated members of the College.

Any information that is required in accordance with legislation is requested upon application for registration and registration renewal. Under section 34 of the *HPA*, this information must be provided by the College to any member of the public, upon request. The College is also required to provide this information to the Alberta Government for the purposes of confirming provider authorization and authentication.

In addition, the College also maintains contact, practice and employment information for each regulated member; this type of information is not released to the public.

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It is important that the information on college registers is accurate and up to date. The College may need to contact regulated members regarding issues that affect their practice. Both the Regulation and the ACSLPA Bylaws require that a regulated member notify the College of any changes to their information, including a change to their name, contact information, employer or practice information. Regulated members may update their contact, practice, employment, and other information by accessing their Member Login on the ACSLPA website. In the case of a name change, the regulated member must provide ACSLPA with proof of the legal name change. This may be in the form of a government issued marriage, name change or divorce certificate.

## **Practice Permits**

As previously mentioned, in order to practice as an SLP or audiologist in Alberta, an individual must be registered with ACSLPA. Under section 36 of the HPA, upon entering the name of a person on the General Register, the Registrar of the College must issue the person a practice permit. A practice permit serves as a “license” to practice and use the protected titles of the profession. Much like a driver’s license that allows one to drive a car, a practice permit allows one to practice their profession, whether they are employed or volunteer in a full time, part time or casual basis. A practice permit must include: the name of the regulated member; the regulated member’s unique registration number; the name of the College issuing the practice permit; a statement that the practice permit is issued pursuant to the HPA; any conditions imposed on the regulated member’s practice permit; the category of registration if the College has more than one category of regulated member; and the expiry date of the practice permit.

Under the HPA, a practice permit must be on display or made available for inspection upon the request of employers or the public. It is also a requirement that the College notify an employer when a practice permit is suspended or conditions are applied.

## **Practice Permit Renewal**

The ACSLPA registration year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Regardless of when a practice permit is issued, it expires every year on December 31.

In early October of each year, all regulated members receive an email notification that they must complete their practice permit renewal. As per the ACSLPA Bylaws, regulated members must submit their complete application for practice permit renewal, including fees and submission of their Continuing Competence Program documentation, for the upcoming year on or before December 1 of each year. Under section 39 of the HPA, if a regulated member’s application for renewal of a practice permit is not received by the date provided for in the Bylaws, the member’s practice permit is suspended. The Registrar will give the regulated member 30 days’ notice prior to cancelling the individual’s registration.

If a regulated member fails to renew their practice permit, they may not work or volunteer in their profession as of the new registration year. ***Under the HPA, it is illegal and an offence for a person to work or volunteer as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist, or use the protected titles of their profession, without being registered with ACSLPA.***

## Changing Registration Status

Any regulated member of ACSLPA who wishes to change their registration status must submit their request to the College. For example, a regulated member who is on the General Register may wish to change their status to Non-Practicing for a specific period of time (i.e., while on maternity / paternity leave). A Non-Practicing members who wishes to return to their professional practice must change their status to Registered **prior** to beginning to work or volunteer in their profession. It should be noted that such members are subject to the current registration and current qualification requirements. Depending on the length of time that a member has not practiced, they may be required to complete an examination and/or a period of supervised practice in order to return to Registered status.

Status changes may be done electronically during the annual practice permit renewal process, or at any time of the year by using the status change form available on the ACSLPA website. Applicable registration fees or refunds are listed on the Fee Schedule, available on the ACSLPA website.

## Registering in another Province

As each province has its own governing legislation, self-regulated health professionals must be registered in each province in which they wish to work, prior to commencing employment. Under the provisions of labour mobility legislation, persons who are certified and in good standing in one regulated jurisdiction in Canada can apply to other Canadian regulated jurisdictions which offer the same certification, without having to retrain, retest or have their qualifications reassessed.

Relevant legislation addressing labour mobility includes the following:

- Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which is federal legislation;
- The *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement*, which has been established between the governments of British Columbia and Alberta, and
- The *New West Partnership Trade Agreement*, which has been established between the governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Such legislation has been established to remove barriers and facilitate labour mobility for professionals between regulated provinces. Under these enactments, when an SLP or audiologist who is registered in good standing with ACSLPA applies for registration in their profession in another regulated province, that province may not require that applicant to undergo significant additional training, examination or assessment as part of the registration process. Registration is based on verification of the professional’s registration with one of the parties to the agreement, along with completion of the required application forms, payment of fees, and meeting any additional requirements that are unique to a province. This might include providing evidence of

holding professional liability insurance, a satisfactory Police Information Check and/or evidence of language proficiency.

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It should be noted that labour mobility legislation does not apply to members of Speech-Language & Audiology Canada or the Canadian Academy of Audiology, as these organizations are not regulatory bodies.

Regulated members who are planning to move to another province should be aware of the importance of maintaining their registration with ACSLPA in order for labour mobility legislation to be applicable. An individual who lets their registration lapse and is no longer registered with ACSLPA is not subject to labour mobility legislation, and will likely experience a much more lengthy application process when applying for registration in another regulated province.

## **Resigning from the College**

An SLP or audiologist who is no longer in practice or who has left Alberta and no longer wishes to maintain their registration status with ACSLPA may resign by submitting a request to the College. This may be done by either submitting a status change form or by advising ACSLPA of their request during the practice permit renewal process.

If an individual does not advise the College of their request to resign, does not renew their practice permit for the upcoming year, is in default of payment, or fails to meet the requirements for practice permit renewal, the Registrar will notify the individual that their practice permit has expired and that their registration will be cancelled within 30 days, unless a complete application for a practice permit is received, and all other requirements are met, as stated in the notice. It is important to note that an individual who resigns from the College or has had their registration cancelled, and wishes to reapply for registration at a future date, must meet all the registration criteria in place at the time of their application. This includes education, current practice and examination requirements.