



Frequently Asked Questions

Due to recent events surrounding the coronavirus, e.g., COVID-19, the Board is preparing this Frequently Asked Question resource (FAQ) to address questions recently received from our practitioners.

1. Is the licensure board open for business during this state of emergency?

Yes, all staff and operations of the licensure board have been moved to a telecommute format. Licensure applications will continue to be processed as usual and complaints will continue to be investigated. Board staff will be available to answer telephone calls and e-mails during our normal business hours, e.g., Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Board members are accessible when necessary to assist staff with responding to any questions. You can contact the Board at (614) 466-3145 (select option #2) or via e-mail at: board@shp.ohio.gov. The Board e-mail will be monitored during evening hours and on weekends.

2. What is the best way to stay updated about the state's preparedness to COVID-19, and any information from the licensure board?

The following are great resources for updates about Ohio's preparedness to COVID-19:

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine

- <https://governor.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/governor/>

Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

- Coronavirus.Ohio.gov - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>
- ODH Facebook: www.facebook.com/OHdeptofhealth/
- ODH Twitter: www.twitter.com/OHdeptofhealth

The following are great resources from the Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board, Ohio Department of Education and related to COVID-19:

Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board

- SHP-COVID-19 FAQ: <https://shp.ohio.gov>
- SHP Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OhioSpeechandHearingProfessionalsBoard/>

Ohio Department of Education

- <https://education.ohio.gov/>
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for Ohio's Schools and District: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Coronavirus>

3. My employer has closed our facility or is developing a plan of preparedness in the event a closure is necessary. We have been asked: "Can we provide services to patients, clients, or students via telehealth?"

The provision of services via telehealth is covered for audiologists and speech-language pathologists under Ohio Administrative Code Chapter Two, entitled "Telehealth Communications" and can be accessed at the following link: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/4753-2>.

Key things to consider:

- A provider of telehealth services who practices in the state shall be licensed by the board.
- A provider of telehealth services shall be competent in both the type of services provided and the methodology and equipment used to provide the service.
- A provider of telehealth services who resides out of state and who provides services to Ohio residents shall be licensed by the board.
- Telehealth service delivery models are specified under OAC section 4753-2-01(B).
- The provider shall be responsible for assessing the client's candidacy for telehealth, including behavioral, physical, and cognitive abilities to participate in services provided via telecommunications.
- Not every patient/client due to their cognitive status, age, health status, caregiver ability, and technical ability is able to participate in telehealth.
- A "Provider" means an audiologist or speech-language pathologist who provides telehealth services, as defined under OAC section 4753-2-01(A)(5).

4. Does the licensure board require audiologists or speech-language pathologists to complete any specific training or certain number of hours of continuing education related to telepractice?

No, the Board's continuing education requirements for audiologists and speech-language pathologists are specified under Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4753-4 and accessible from the following link: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/4753-4>. Practitioners must be proficient in the provision of services via telehealth.

5. My employer, clinic, and/or facility has closed due to COVID-19 and I cannot continue providing services to my patients/clients as an audiologist, hearing aid dealer, hearing aid fitter, or speech-language pathologist. Is this considered patient/client abandonment?

No. Patient/Client abandonment is defined under the licensure board's code of ethics. For audiologists and speech-language pathologists, the code of ethics defines patient/client abandonment under Ohio Administrative Code section [4753-9-01\(C\)\(3\)\(d\)](#). For hearing aid dealers and hearing aid fitters, the code of ethics defines patient/client abandonment under Ohio Administrative Code section [4747-1-23\(C\)\(3\)\(d\)](#).

Patient/client abandonment may occur when:

- The practitioner permanently discontinues providing service to the patient/client;
- The practitioner did not provide reasonable notice to the patient/client prior to permanently discontinuing their service; and
- The practitioner did not provide information to the patient/client about alternatives for obtaining care.

6. My employer or facility has informed me that appointments will need to be rescheduled due to COVID-19. What should I take into consideration?

Any plan of action communicated by the employer and/or facility regarding the rescheduling of appointments for patients should be well documented by the practitioner. Documentation will ensure continuity of the patient's care that could be impacted by any interruption of service.

7. I am a Conditional Speech-Language Pathologist completing my supervised professional experience year. I have a few questions:

a. If I have to provide services via telehealth due to COVID-19, how will my supervised professional experience supervisor meet the onsite conference requirements?

A person holding a conditional speech-language pathology license is permitted to practice speech-language pathology without direct supervision. If a supervised professional experience supervisor is unable to hold an onsite conference in person or via tele-supervision pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code section [4753-3-07\(F\)](#), the conditional licensee may still provide services under their license without an on-site conference. If an onsite conference is not possible under section 4753-3-07(F), alternative mentoring paradigms should be used by the supervisor on a regular basis, such as telephone, e-mail, video conferencing until onsite conferences can resume.

b. If I cannot provide face-to-face services or telehealth services due to COVID-19, will I need to file an amended plan with a new ending date?

No, due to this unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation with COVID-19, an amended plan will not need to be filed within thirty days if you cannot complete your supervised professional experience by the end date indicated on your initial plan. The Board will still accept and process the amended plan, but we are going to deem all plan end dates as "To Be Determined" until such time that an end date is definitively known by the licensee and their supervisor.

8. I submitted my application for licensure but do not wish to move forward at this time. Will my application be deemed abandoned by the Board?

No, we realize the situation with COVID-19 will impact applicant's ability to complete and submit all of the licensure requirements, e.g., criminal background check, transcripts, etc. Anyone who submits an application for license will not be penalized by having their application abandoned after 60 days of inactivity. All applications will remain in pending status until all items are received. Our board staff will contact applicants to check of the status of their progress.

9. I am a second year graduate student enrolled at an accredited university in Ohio completing by student clinical experience requirements. My university is closing due to COVID-19 which may impact the hours I still need to complete for my clinical experience. Do second year speech-language pathology graduate students need categorized hours, e.g., 20 hours per speech pediatric, 20 hours in adult language, etc.?

The Board does not have jurisdiction over this question as this issue falls within the purview of the university since graduate students are not required to hold a license to complete their student clinical experience requirements. Each university will make their own decisions regarding the completion of their academic and student clinical requirements for their graduate students completing their speech and audiology programs.

The Board's rule for educational requirements are found under Ohio Administrative Code section [4753-3-04](#) and states in relevant part:

(D) Course work requirements for licensure shall be deemed to be met when the applicant

was awarded a master's degree or higher in the area in which licensure is sought from an accredited college or university program.

For students who plan to apply for licensure outside Ohio, the Board recommends that the respective state licensure board be contacted to verify their educational requirements.

10. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) has postponed my speech-language pathology or audiology Praxis exam, which is required for licensure. Will this cause a delay with receiving my license?

We are aware that COVID-19 is causing cancellations with scheduled Praxis exams in some areas administered by ETS. We anticipate ETS will resume the scheduling of their exam as soon as possible. During this state of emergency, the Board operations will be conducted virtually via telecommute. At this time, we do not anticipate any delay in the processing of licensure applications, and licenses will be issued on a daily basis once all required items are received.

11. Where can I find more information about the State of Ohio's preparedness to COVID-19?

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

These FAQs will be updated as needed. Please do not hesitate to contact the licensure board to address any questions or for further clarification via e-mail at: board@shp.ohio.gov or telephone at: (614) 466-3145

The Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board

Tammy H. Brown, M.A., CCC-A, Board Certified in Audiology, Board President
Barbara L. Prakup, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Board Secretary

Lisa Dodge Burton, Public Member

Helen L. Mayle, Public Member

Karen Mitchell, Au.D., CCC-A

Michael R. Pratt, H.A.S.

Ann M. Slone, M.A., CCC-SLP

Carrie L. Spangler, Au.D., CCC-A

Matthew Starner, H.A.S.

Gregg B. Thornton, Esq.

Executive Director

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