

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11249, March 22, 2019]

**AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF SPEECH LANGUAGE
PATHOLOGY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

ARTICLE I
TITLE AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Speech Language Pathology Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes the important role of speech language pathologists in national building and promotes the sustained development of a corps of speech language pathologists whose competence have been determined by honest and credible licensure examinations, and whose standards of professional practice and services are world-class, internationally recognized, and globally competitive through regulatory measures, programs, and activities that foster their continuing professional growth.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

(a) *Communication disorder* refer to the impairment in the ability to: (1) receive and/or process symbol systems; (2) represent concepts in systems; or (3) transmit and use symbol systems. The impairment may be observed in the disorders of hearings, language, and speech processes.

(b) *Diagnosis* refers to the act of identifying a human communication or swallowing abnormality or disorder by analyzing the symptoms presented. It may also include a study of the origin and development of the symptoms.

(c) *Evaluation* refers to the global appraisal of the significance and implications of a diagnostic assessment that may include formal and informal procedures.

(d) *Language* refers to any socially and culturally accepted, structured symbolic system for interpersonal communication composed of sounds, letters, manual sign or other symbols arranged in ordered sequences or strings that express thoughts, intentions, experiences and feelings comprised of orthographic, phonological, syntactic, semantic or pragmatic components.

(e) *Speech* refers to the medium of oral communication that employs a linguistic code (language). Through this medium, one can express thoughts and feelings, and understand those of others who employ the same code.

(f) *Speech language pathologist* refers to a person who is registered and licensed to practice speech language pathology and who holds a valid certificate of registration and professional identification card issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Speech Language Pathology and the Professional Regulation Commission under the provisions of this Act.

(g) *Speech language pathology* refers to the allied health profession devoted to the evaluation, diagnosis, management, and prevention of human communication and swallowing disorders.

(h) *Swallowing disorder* refers to difficulties in the management of a solid or liquid bolus in the oral, pharyngeal, or laryngeal stages of feeding.

ARTICLE II THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

SEC. 4. *Creation and Composition of the Board.* - Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, there shall be created the Professional Regulatory Board of Speech Language Pathology, hereinafter referred to as the Board, under the administrative supervision and control of the Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. The Board shall be composed of a chairperson and two (2) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines from the three (3) recommendees for each vacant position chosen from the five (5) nominees of the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of speech language pathologists.

SEC. 5. *Qualifications of the Members of the Board.* - The chairperson or member of the Board shall, at the time of appointment, possess the following qualifications:

(a) A natural born citizen of the Philippines and an actual resident thereof for at least five (5) years before appointment;

(b) A duly registered and licensed speech language pathologist holding a valid certificate of registration and professional identification card, in active practice for the past five (5) years and a member of good standing of the AIPO of speech language pathologists prior to appointment, except if appointed as the first chairperson or member;

(c) Of good moral character and must not have been convicted of any offense involving moral turpitude; and

(d) Must neither have pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in any school, academy, college, university or institution conferring an academic degree necessary for admission to the practice of speech language pathology, or where review classes in preparation for the licensure examination are being offered or conducted, not be a member of the faculty or of the administration thereof.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Board.* - The Board shall have the authority to:

(a) Promulgate, administer and enforce rules and regulations necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Act;

(b) Administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;

- (c) Supervise and regulate the registration, licensure, and practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines;
- (d) Adopt an official seal of the Board;
- (e) Maintain a roster of speech language pathologists indicating therein basic information about the professionals;
- (f) Study the conditions affecting the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines and adopt measures for the enhancement of the professional, ethical and technical standards of the practice;
- (g) Ensure, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), that all educational institutions offering speech language pathology education comply with the policies, standards and requirements of the course prescribed by the CHED in the areas of curriculum, faculty, library and facilities;
- (h) Adopt a Code of Ethics for speech language pathologists;
- (i) Develop and maintain standards for the practice of speech language pathology;
- (j) Issue, suspend, revoke, and reinstate the certificate of registration or cancel special temporary permit for the practice of speech language pathology;
- (k) Prescribe guidelines and criteria in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for speech language pathology;
- (l) Prescribe the area of competence to be included in the examination and their relative weights: determine the syllabi and Tables of Specifications (TOS) of the examination subjects, in consultation with the AIPO of speech language pathologists and the duly recognized association of schools conferring a bachelor's or other entry level degree in speech language pathology; construct the test questions in licensure examinations; and score and rate the examination papers;
- (m) Hear or investigate any violation of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations and the Code of Ethics for speech language pathologists, and for this purpose, to issue *subpoena duces tecum* and/or *ad testificandum* to secure the appearance of the witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith: *Provided*, That the decision of the Board shall, unless appealed to the Commission, become final and executory fifteen (15) days from receipt of the judgment or decision;
- (n) Grant registration without examination, subject to the approval by the Commission;
- (o) Issue or cancel certificates of recognition for advanced studies, researches and accomplishments that contribute to the enrichment of the profession; and
- (p) Perform such other powers and functions as it may deem necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

The policies, resolutions, rules and regulations issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to the reviews and approval of the Commission.

SEC. 7. Term of Office. The chairperson and members of the Board shall hold office for the three (3) years after appointment or until their successors shall have been

appointed and duly qualified: *Provided*, That members of the first Board to be appointed after the approval of this Act shall hold office for the following terms: chairperson for three (3) years, one member for two (2) years, and the other member for one (1) year: *Provided, further*, That the chairperson or any member may be reappointed for another term of three (3) years but in no case shall the individual serve continuously for more than six (6) years. Vacancy in the Board shall be filled for the unexpired term only. Each member of the Board shall automatically be registered as speech language pathologist and issued a certificate of registration and professional identification card and shall take the proper oath of office prior to assumption.

SEC. 8. *Compensation of the Members of the Professional Regulatory Board.* - The chairperson and members of the Board shall receive compensation and allowances comparable to those being received by the chairpersons and members of existing regulatory boards under the Commission as provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Suspension or Removal of Board Members.* - Any member of the Board may be suspended or removed from office for gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, unprofessionalism, immorality, unethical or dishonorable conduct, final judgment of crimes involving moral turpitude, manipulation or rigging of the licensure examination results, and disclosure of secret and confidential information in the examination questions prior to the conduct of the said examination, or tampering of grades.

The administrative proceedings shall be heard by the Commission, whose recommendation shall be submitted to the Office of the President. During the investigation, the respondent shall be placed under preventive suspension by the Commission and another qualified individual shall be designated to fill the temporary vacancy in the Board.

SEC. 10. *Supervision of the Board, Custody of its Records, Secretariat and Support Services.* - The Board shall be under the administrative supervision of the Commission. All records of the Board, including applications for examination and administrative and other investigative cases conducted by the Board shall be under the custody of the Commission.

The Commission shall designate the Secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat and other support services to implement the provision of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Annual Report.* - The Board shall submit an annual report to the Commission after the close of each calendar year, giving a detailed account of the proceedings of the Board during the year and recommending measures to be adopted, with the end in view of upgrading and improving the conditions affecting the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines.

ARTICLE III LICENSURE EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION

SEC. 12. *Examination Required.* - Unless otherwise provided in this Act, all applicants for registration for the practice of speech language pathology shall be required to undergo a licensure examination to be administered by the Board in such places and dates as the Commission may designate, subject to compliance with the requirements prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 13. *Qualification for Examination.* - In order to be admitted in the licensure examination, it must be established to the satisfaction of the Board that, at the time of filing of application, the applicant is:

- (a) A citizen of the Philippines or of a foreign state/country which observes reciprocity with the Philippines for the practice of speech language pathology;
- (b) Of good moral character;
- (c) Has not been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude; and
- (d) A graduate of a bachelor's degree in speech language pathology from a school, college or university in the Philippines or abroad that is recognized by the CHED.

SEC. 14. *Scope of Examination.* - The coverage of the licensure examination for speech language pathologists shall include the following:

- (a) Anatomy and physiology of the speech and hearing mechanism;
- (b) Neurological bases of speech and hearing disorders;
- (c) Articulation and phonological disorders;
- (d) Hearing impairment and aural habilitation;
- (e) Language and cognitive communication disorders;
- (f) Fluency disorders;
- (g) Voice disorders;
- (h) Cleft Lip and palate and Craniofacial Conditions;
- (i) Dysphagia;
- (j) Medical and neurological disorders that may cause communication and swallowing disorders;
- (k) Normal development and function of speech, language, hearing and swallowing;
- (l) Principles of assessment and intervention for speech, language, hearing and swallowing conditions; and
- (m) Research, Professional Ethics and Community Development.

The coverage of the speech language pathology licensure examination, including the percentage weights of the examination subjects, shall be determined, or may be modified, reclustered or rearranged by the Board, as the need arises, to conform to changes in the standards of practice.

SEC. 15. *Registration Without Examination as Speech Language Pathologist.* - A person who possesses the pertinent qualifications required for admission in the licensure examination for speech language pathologists pursuant to the provisions of this Act may be registered without examination: *Provided, That* the applicant files