

## **IRISH ASSOCIATION OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS**

### **Information for IASLT members on the Agreement for the Mutual Recognition of Professional Association Credentials**

In November 2008, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA), the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT), the New Zealand Speech-Language Therapists Association (NZSTA), the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) and the Speech Pathology Association of Australia (Speech Pathology Australia) signed an international agreement on the mutual recognition of professional association credentials (MRA). The agreement came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009. The aims of the agreement include:

- Assisting the academic community, continuing education providers, industry, regulatory authorities and the public by identifying common standards of clinical competence;
- Facilitating the ongoing exchange of knowledge as it relates to research, continuing professional development, emerging technologies and other aspects of professional practice;
- Promoting greater international understanding of the role of speech-language pathologists;
- Responding to governmental interests in reducing trade barriers;
- Streamlining the mutual recognition process for individuals who are credentialed by the signatory associations and improving mobility for employment abroad; and
- Providing a process for countries interested in the mutual recognition of qualifications and credentials for speech-language pathology.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The agreement is applicable to Full Members of IASLT only. It will not apply to new graduates in their first year of membership (New Graduate Members) as each of the signatory professional bodies requires applicants to have had a level of experience before making application for recognition through the MRA. The other associations will recognise the IASLT New Graduate Membership Year as substantially equivalent to, for example, the ASHA Clinical Fellowship Year and will not require additional evidence from applicants or require that they complete a Clinical Fellowship Year.

### **Application process for membership of a signatory professional association**

The agreement will make the process of gaining recognition by the other professional bodies easier for IASLT members. However it is important to understand that this is not a reciprocity agreement – it does *not* give an automatic right to work in each of the signatory countries. Certain countries also have federal, state or provincial licensing requirements which will have to be met by applicants independently of this process. Each professional body also specifies certain additional requirements for applicants from each of the signatory countries.

## Applications

IASLT members applying to obtain certification (ASHA, CASLPA, RCSLT, and Speech Pathology Australia) or full membership (NZSTA) from another Signatory Association must apply to the New Association's national office.<sup>1</sup> The application must include:

- The application form and applicable fees of the New Association.
- A letter of good standing<sup>2</sup> from the applicant's Home Association attesting that the applicant holds Full Membership with IASLT.
- A signed declaration of disclosure by the applicant regarding any convictions for criminal offences, any findings of professional misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity in relation to the profession and any pending charges before any disciplinary board related to the practice of the profession.
- A signed statement of consent to allow all disciplinary boards to share information regarding any convictions and disciplinary actions including any that may arise subsequent to the application against the individual and pending charges if such release of information is consistent with the applicable policies and procedures of the Signatory Association and the law of that country.
- Any additional requirements specified by the New Association.

The application may also include:

- Demonstration and/or documentation of language proficiency necessary for competent clinical practice in the country to which the applicant is applying.

## 4. Additional Requirements

A. *ASHA requires IASLT MRA applicants to provide the following:*

1. Documented evidence of a total of 400 clock hours of clinical practicum in direct client contact (including up to 25 hours of observation) supervised<sup>3</sup> by an individual who is ASHA certified, CASLPA certified, Speech Pathology Australia certified or eligible for Speech Pathology Australia certification, RCSLT certified or eligible for RCSLT certification, or an individual who holds full membership or is eligible for full membership of IASLT or NZSTA. Any balance of the 400 hours that is not obtained in the academic programme prior to graduation may be obtained during the individual's first year of postgraduate clinical experience. However, the applicant must still achieve a minimum of 1,260 total hours clinical experience as described in (3) below after the minimum 400 hours has been satisfied.
2. Evidence of passing the ASHA-approved national certification examination (CCC).
3. Documented evidence of a minimum of 1,260 post-graduate hours of clinical experience (the equivalent of 36 weeks of professional employment at 35 hours per week)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Glossary of Terms for definitions of membership categories for each of the signatory associations

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'Good Standing'

<sup>3</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'ASHA definition of supervision'

<sup>4</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'Post-Graduate Clinical Experience'

**B. CASLPA requires IASLT MRA applicants to provide the following:**

1. Evidence of passing the CASLPA clinical certification examination.
2. Documented evidence of prescribed clinical practicum hours and university transcripts indicating date of conferred degree.
3. Evidence of education and supervised practicum experience in assessment and treatment in Audiology/Hearing Science according to current CASLPA standards<sup>5</sup>.
4. Assessment by a designated credentialing agency<sup>6</sup>.

**C. NZSTA requires IASLT MRA applicants to provide the following:**

1. Demonstrated competency<sup>7</sup> in dysphagia assessment, diagnosis and management, either through evidence of specific courses passed, or prior experience<sup>8</sup>.

**D. RCSLT No additional requirements for IASLT MRA applicants**

**E. Speech Pathology Australia requires MRA applicants from the Associations specified below to provide the following:**

1. Demonstrated competency in dysphagia assessment, diagnosis and management, either through evidence of specific courses passed, or prior experience<sup>9</sup>.

**Result of Application<sup>10</sup>**

- a. Recognition of credentials will be granted to the applicant by the New Association if all requirements as set out above are met or if the New Association grants an exception as defined in writing, plus payment of all applicable fees for processing the application
- b. Recognition bestows:
  - ASHA certification with the option of also becoming a member of ASHA.
  - Certified Membership of CASLPA.
  - Eligibility for Full Membership of the NZSTA with the option of becoming a full member on payment of an additional joining fee.
  - Certified Membership of RCSLT.
  - Eligibility for Certified Practising Membership<sup>11</sup> of Speech Pathology Australia and the option of becoming a member with Certified Practising Speech Pathologist (CPSP) status on payment of an additional joining fee.
- c. Individuals recognised by the New Association shall have the same rights and privileges and be subject to the same responsibilities, obligations, and restrictions as all other certified

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<sup>5</sup> Details of requirements may be obtained from CASLPA. Contact details on page

<sup>6</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'Credentialing Agency'

<sup>7</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'Competency'

<sup>8</sup> Details of requirements may be obtained from NZSTA. Contact details on page

<sup>9</sup> Details of requirements may be obtained from Speech Pathology Australia. Contact details on page

<sup>10</sup> NOTE: All disputes concerning the administration of the application process including a decision to grant or deny certification or full membership under this agreement shall be resolved solely by the New Association

<sup>11</sup> See Glossary of Terms 'Eligibility for membership of Speech Pathology Australia'

individuals or full members of the New Association. Once recognition is obtained under this Agreement, the individual's status of certification, full membership or eligibility for certification or full membership status will not change regardless of the signatory's current status in this Agreement.

- d. All disputes concerning the administration of the application process, including a decision to grant or deny certification, full membership or eligibility for certification or full membership under this Agreement will be resolved solely by the New Association.
- e. There is no provision within the Agreement for an appeal process. If an applicant fails to be recognised by the New Association, IASLT may request from the New Association, with permission from the applicant, a statement of reasons for the rejection. Where this occurs, the New Association will supply the statement, if the policies and procedures of the New Association and the law of the country permits.
- f. Applicants should obtain further information, applications forms etc from the websites of the signatory associations:

**Web sites of Associations**

For information about the Signatory Associations, the website addresses are:

ASHA [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

CASLPA [www.caslpa.ca](http://www.caslpa.ca)

NZSTA [www.speechtherapy.org.nz](http://www.speechtherapy.org.nz)

RCSLT [www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)

Speech Pathology Australia [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

## Glossary of Terms

**ASHA Definition of Supervision:** Direct supervision must be in real time and must be no less than 25% of the student's total contact with each client/patient. (This requirement applies only to student supervision during clinical practicum, but not to the Clinical Fellowship experience.) Supervision of clinical practicum must include direct observation, guidance, and feedback to permit the student to monitor, evaluate, and improve performance and to develop clinical competence.

**Certificates of Clinical Competence (CCC):** The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA's) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) is a voluntary credential and designates the holder as an individual who has met the established standards necessary to provide independent clinical services and to supervise the clinical practice of student trainees, clinicians who do not hold certification, and support personnel. The certificate can be obtained by an individual who meets specific requirements in each of the following areas: graduate degree, academic course work, clinical practicum, and supervised postgraduate clinical experience. Holders must also pass the ASHA approved national examination in speech-language pathology. Holders of the CCC-SLP must abide by ASHA's Code of Ethics, which incorporates the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles, pay an annual fee, and meet the professional development requirements (30 contact hours or 3 CEUs over a three- (3-) year period) to maintain their certification. Certificate holders may or may not choose to be members of ASHA.

**Certified Member of CASLPA, S-LP(C):** This is the trademark used by speech-language pathologists who are clinically certified by the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). Clinically certified professionals must be full members of CASLPA, meet clinical certification practicum requirements, and pass the CASLPA clinical certification examination. Clinical certification with CASLPA is a voluntary process and is not a license to practice. Internationally trained professionals, other than ASHA certificate holders, must go through the certification process to be eligible to be a member of CASLPA and can then request to also hold clinical certification. To maintain clinical certification status, members must pay annual membership dues and report a minimum of 45 hours of continuing education equivalents (CEEs) over a three- (3-) year cycle. Members of the association must abide by the Code of Ethics, by-laws and policies of CASLPA and pay annual dues.

**Certified Member of RCSLT (Cert MRCSLT):** A designation that may be used by a speech and language therapist who has been granted certification by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). Certified members will have met the requirements for newly qualified practitioners and practitioners that are returning to practice, they will have maintained currency of practice, and will have demonstrated a commitment to maintaining competence and expertise through continuing education and a personal programme of continuing professional development.

**Certified Practising Speech Pathologist (CPSP):** A designation that may be used by a speech pathologist, who is a member of the Speech Pathology Association of Australia Limited. (Speech Pathology Australia), who practises full- or part-time and who has met the requirements of the Professional Self Regulation (PSR) program of continuing professional development or education. To be qualified to use the title of Certified Practising Speech Pathologist and the post-nominal initials of CPSP, the speech pathologist must have participated in and met the requirements of the program for at least one (1) year. Consistent with the mutual recognition of credentials under the MRA, successful applicants to Speech Pathology Australia will be eligible for immediate certified status and use of the post-nominals CPSP, and will be conferred this status upon joining the Association and making payment of the Practising Membership fee. Continuing eligibility to use

the post-nominals of CPSP is dependent upon members demonstrating that they have successfully met the requirements of the PSR program throughout the year when they renew their membership annually.

**Clinical Fellowship (also known as CF):** ASHA's Clinical Fellowship is a postgraduate professional clinical experience that is closely supervised by an individual who is ASHA-certified, or otherwise qualified as described in Section 4 of the Agreement above, and meets all requirements established by ASHA. Professional and clinical experience includes direct patient contact, consultations, record keeping, or any other duties relevant to a bona fide program of clinical work. Time spent in supervision of students, academic teaching, and research, as well as administrative activity that does not deal directly with patient management, may NOT be counted as professional experience in this context.

The CF is defined as a minimum of 36 weeks full-time professional employment at 35 hours per week, or a total of 1,260 hours. Part-time experience also is acceptable; however, professional employment of less than 5 hours per week may not be used to fulfill any part of this requirement. At least 80% of the Clinical Fellowship work week must be in direct client contact (assessment, diagnosis, evaluation, screening, habilitation, or rehabilitation) related to the management process. A formal evaluation of the clinical performance must be completed by the qualified supervisor, as described above, using the current Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory (CFSI), demonstrating successful achievement of the skills identified in the assessment instrument.

**Competency:** Competency is the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and/or skills and where relevant, demonstrated personal attributes, as defined in the certification scheme (standards). (ISO/IEC Guide 2 (2004), Standardization and related activities-General vocabulary).

**Eligibility for Membership of Speech Pathology Australia:** The majority of employers in Australia accept eligibility for Practising Membership of Speech Pathology Australia as the indication of qualification to practice as a speech pathologist. In Queensland it is a legal requirement for speech pathologists to be registered with the Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland before they can practice in that state.

**Full Member of NZSTA:** An individual who is engaged in the activities of speech-language therapy as a practitioner, administrator, educator, researcher or any combination thereof, for which they will receive payment during any part of the year. A Full Member has demonstrated competency in communication and swallowing disorders; has met the New-Entrant, Overseas Applicant and Return to Practice requirements; demonstrates a commitment to ongoing professional development by meeting the continuing professional development criteria and is bound by the NZSTA Code of Ethics. For the specific purposes of MRA Full Members of the NZSTA who graduated prior to 1993 will be excluded from the agreement.

**Good Standing:** Definitions of 'good standing' could include such requirements as adherence to by-laws and/or codes of ethical conduct, past competent professional practice, not subject to disciplinary action, current with all dues or fees, or any other conditions specified by the Home Association. The Signatory Associations may have different definitions of 'good standing'. Each Signatory Association is required to include its definition of 'good standing' in letters issued to applicants.

**Modified Clinical Fellowship:** A Modified Clinical Fellowship is a professional clinical experience for individuals who have had at least one year of previous postgraduate clinical experience that meets all of the requirements of the Clinical Fellowship above, and is defined as a

minimum of 12 weeks of professional employment at 35 hours per week, or a total of 420 postgraduate hours.

**RCSLT Certification:** In the UK certification is granted initially for one (1) year only. Should an aspect of practice not meet the standard of competence expected after the year of monitored practice, the applicant will be offered an opportunity to undertake additional supervision, education, or assessment, which must be satisfactorily completed or passed for continued certification.

**Supervised Clinical Practice (NZSTA):** The NZSTA does not specify strict criteria in regards to the amount of supervision that should occur in the year of clinical practice in the country of certification. As a guideline, 36 supervisory activities spaced across the 36-week period of supervision are acceptable. Supervisory activities could include a combination of on-site observations, as well as off-site monitoring activities. Supervisory activities include but are not limited to direct observation during delivery of speech-language therapy services, discussion regarding treatment strategies, monitoring participation in case conferences, evaluation of clinical records, evaluation of the therapist based on consultation with professional colleagues or an employer. For applicants from CASLPA supervision must be provided by a CASLPA Certified Speech-Language Pathologist. For applicants from Speech Pathology Australia supervision must be provided by a Speech Pathology Australia Certified Practising Speech Pathologist. Documented evidence of successful completion of supervision is required. This evidence must include a supervisor's report and a summary of supervisory activities.

## Contact Details

e-mail: [info@iaslt.com](mailto:info@iaslt.com)