



Operating Standard

Title: Professional Licensure

Number: A2000.55

Type: Administrative

Responsible: VP Academic Affairs; CAO

Related Policies: A2000, A2100

Linked Operating Standards: [A2000.00](#), [A2000.05](#), [A2000.30](#), [A2000.35](#), [A2000.40](#),
[A2000.45](#), [A2000.50](#), A2000.60, [A2100.00](#), [A2100.05](#),
A2100.10, A2100.20, [A2100.40](#)

Related Laws:

Related External Standards: [ICCB & SARA](#); [Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation](#); Nursing - Illinois Nurse Practice Act, 225 ILCS 65/, OTA, 225 ILCS 75/, Cosmetology IL Administrative Code 225 ILCS 410; Illinois Department of Public Health [EMS](#) and [CNA](#), [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(ACEN\) Standards 4 and 6](#); [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education \(ACOTE\) Standards A.4.2, B.5.1 – B.5.26](#).

HLC Criterion: 4C, 5B

Statement

Shawnee Community College is committed to ensuring that academic programs leading to professional licensure are designed to meet the necessary educational requirements for licensure eligibility. When a program leads to licensure, our courses will be developed or modified to include targeted content that prepares students to sit for these examinations.

This operating standard establishes guidelines for curriculum development, student advisement, and compliance with state and national licensing regulations. By aligning programs with industry and state authorization standards, the College supports students in their pursuit of professional credentials and career advancement.

Definitions

Licensure: Licensure is a state-granted authorization that permits an individual to legally practice a profession. Licensure is typically required by law and involves meeting specific educational, experiential, and examination requirements as set by a state licensing board. Example: Nursing, teaching, and cosmetology often require licensure to legally work in the field.

Certification: Certification is a voluntary process by which a non-governmental body (often a professional association) recognizes that an individual has met predetermined qualifications and demonstrated knowledge or skills in a specific area.

Key Distinction from Licensure: While licensure is mandated by law to practice, certification is typically optional and used to signify advanced expertise or specialization. Some professions may require both.

State Authorization: State Authorization refers to a college's legal permission to offer educational programs in a particular state. For distance education and reciprocal licensure, this is governed by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA).

NC-SARA (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements): NC-SARA is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes national standards for postsecondary distance education. Participation allows institutions to offer distance education programs and licensure programs to students who reside outside of the college's state with streamlined oversight.

Licensure Exam (or Board Exam): A Licensure Exam is a standardized assessment required by a state licensing board to evaluate a candidate's competency before granting licensure. These exams are often nationally recognized but administered under state-specific conditions.

Regulatory Body / Licensing Board: A Regulatory Body (also known as a Licensing Board) is a government agency responsible for overseeing licensure in a particular profession. It determines eligibility, issues licenses, and enforces compliance with professional standards.

Licensure Eligibility: Licensure Eligibility means that a program's curriculum satisfies the educational requirements established by a state's licensing board, allowing a graduate to apply for licensure. It does not guarantee licensure, as other requirements (e.g., background checks, exams) may still apply.

Professional Program: A Professional Program is an academic program specifically designed to prepare students for a licensed or credentialed occupation. These programs are aligned with industry, state, and national standards.

Licensure Disclosure: Licensure Disclosure refers to the federally mandated communication institutions must provide to prospective and enrolled students indicating whether a program meets educational requirements for licensure in a given state.

Attestation Form: An Attestation Form is a document a student signs to acknowledge they have been informed that a program may not meet licensure requirements in their state of residence, but they still choose to enroll based on their intent to work in a qualifying state.

Guidelines

Licensure-Driven Curriculum Development:

Courses and programs will be intentionally designed or updated to include preparatory content aligned with current licensure examination requirements. This content will be regularly reviewed in the *B1004 Professional Programming* monitoring report to remain current with state and professional standards according to the *B1002 Monitoring College Effectiveness* Board of Trustees Strategic Outcomes Policy.

Alignment with State Authorization Reciprocity:

To ensure we maintain our ability to deliver completely distance education programs and licensure programs to students who reside outside of Illinois, the College participates in the [NC-SARA program](#) and has a designated NC-SARA Coordinator. This commitment reinforces our dedication to high-quality, accessible education that meets both academic and state authorization standards.

Student Licensing Responsibility:

In accordance with NC-SARA guidelines, students residing outside of Illinois who are prospective students can access information about whether successful completion of a program will result in eligibility for licensure in their home state by visiting our [website](#) or contacting the Registrar or an advisor. All students - prospective or otherwise - are assumed to be residents of the State of Illinois until they report otherwise. Students who enroll in our programs that may lead to professional licensure are briefed of their eligibility during advisement. The College can deny enrollment to students who will be ineligible based on their location, and will notify students that their eligibility status has changed if they move to a state in which they become ineligible.

Students are encouraged to contact the appropriate licensing agency in their home state or the state in which they plan to work prior to beginning the program in order to assure that the program is approved to provide the desired licensure.

Implementation**Curriculum Integration:**

Faculty and curriculum developers will adhere to the following for programs that lead to licensure:

- align courses with professional and state authorization standards when creating and revising courses and programs
- incorporate licensure exam content into courses when creating and revising courses and programs
- include a program learning outcome regarding passage of the licensure exam
- notify the College's NC-SARA Coordinator when a new licensure program is created or licensure information for a program has changed

Continuous Review:

Academic departments will regularly assess and update course materials in collaboration with industry experts and licensing bodies to ensure ongoing compliance. This review occurs in the following ways:

- Advisory councils ([link to the advisory council operating standard](#)) are held twice a year. One of these meetings is devoted to assessing the content within the curriculum for relevancy and accuracy.
- Annually, each program reviews their course and program learning outcomes in the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan as part of the [Student Academic Assessment Cycle](#).
- Programs annually review their relevancy and continued alignment to standards and licensure requirements through completion of the Professional Programming monitoring report.
- ICCB [Program Review](#) is conducted for every program every five years.
- Programs will strive to obtain feedback from students through graduate follow-up surveys

Student Notification of Licensure Eligibility:

The following steps will be taken to ensure compliance with the NC-SARA student notification regulations:

1. The NC-SARA Coordinator will communicate each spring with the Deans who provide oversight of programs that lead to licensure to ensure the information on the College's NC-

SARA Licensure website is accurate. For prospective students, this website provides initial information regarding licensure eligibility in their home state or state in which they plan to work.

- i. The coordinator will solicit awareness of disclosure requirements from faculty. Each year in the fall, an email will be sent to the Deans asking them to complete a form regarding the licensure requirements in their programs. The results will be stored as part of our documentation of our good faith efforts to comply with NC-SARA's disclosure requirement – by updating our faculty leadership about the importance of this process.
- ii. The coordinator will solicit on-the-ground intelligence. Each year, the Deans will use the form to share any insights or concerns they have about pending changes in state licensure rules. An email can be sent to the coordinator if they have imminent concerns about eligibility any other time of the year.
- iii. After collecting this information, the coordinator will perform a yearly review to ensure each program's curriculum continues to meet licensure requirements in every state we serve.

2. On the College's admissions application, students declare a program and provide their current address. For students who declare a program that leads to licensure, a [letter](#) will be mailed and/or emailed to that student, along with their admissions letter, indicating their licensure eligibility upon successful completion of the program. For students who reside out of state, this letter will indicate either verification that our [program will prepare them for licensure](#) in their home state or that we [cannot guarantee the program will prepare them for licensure](#) in their home state based on their current address on the application. If we cannot guarantee licensure in their state, an [attestation form](#) will be included with this letter.

3. When a students' address changes after admission:

a. Students are required to meet with an advisor before they can register each semester. At every advisement appointment, students are asked to verify their address. Advisors direct students to submit address changes to the Registrar. If a student's address change triggers a change in their licensure eligibility (i.e. moves out of IL or from a state outside of IL to another state outside of IL), a [letter](#) will be mailed and/or emailed to that student to indicate the change (see #2).

b. Current College residency operating standards require students to submit a change of address form when their address changes. If a student's address change form triggers a change in their licensure eligibility (i.e. moves out of IL or from a state outside of IL to another state outside of IL), a letter will be mailed and/or emailed to that student to indicate the change.

Accountability & Oversight

- The Vice President of Academic Affairs will oversee the continuous review of licensure-related programs and appoint an NC-SARA Coordinator to ensure alignment with regulatory requirements.
- The NC-SARA Coordinator will oversee compliance with state authorization regulations for all distance education and licensure programs. The coordinator will:
 - work with the Registrar to ensure the College remains in compliance with all regulations
 - keep all NC-SARA processes up to date
 - communicate to internal College stakeholders all processes
 - participate in NC-SARA professional development meetings

- submit all required NC-SARA compliance reports
 - renew the College's NC-SARA membership annually
- The Academic Deans will:
 - ensure their respective programs remain in alignment with current state and professional licensure standards
 - plan and conduct the program bi-annual advisory meetings with faculty
 - submit the annual Professional Programming monitoring report
 - ensure completion of the 5-year Program Reviews to ICCB with faculty
 - communicate with the NC-SARA compliance officer regarding new programs that lead to licensure and/or are delivered fully distance education and changes to these existing programs and licensure requirements
 - assist the NC-SARA compliance officer with data required for reporting, including tracking all field experience placements
- The Registrar will:
 - mail and/or email licensure letters to all students who enroll in programs that lead to licensure (The Nursing administrative assistant will do this for all Nursing students)
 - mail and/or email licensure letters to all students whose address changes may result in a change in their licensure eligibility (The Nursing administrative assistant will do this for all Nursing students)
 - collaborate with the NC-SARA Coordinator regarding any barriers, challenges, or changes to this licensure eligibility process
 - facilitate the implementation of this operating standard with Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

Communication Strategy

The College will:

- maintain an up-to-date webpage for NC-SARA and for listing licensure-related programs, their accreditation statuses, and state-specific licensing information
- post licensure exam pass rates on the website

Any changes to licensure requirements will be communicated through:

- direct mail and/or email notifications to enrolled students
- advisement appointments for all newly enrolled students
- faculty and staff updates during meetings
- advisement staff training to ensure they are informed on current licensure requirements
- a designated point of contact for licensure-related questions will be listed on the College's website.

Student Support

The College will strive to provide student support for licensure, where applicable and available; including, but not limited to:

- licensure exam prep materials, including study guides, practice exams, and faculty-led review sessions.
- workshops or boot camps specifically designed to help students prepare for licensure exams.
- on-campus licensure exam proctoring where applicable and/or available.
- assistance with registration for licensing exams and guidance on test-day procedures when possible.
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Change Log		Governance Unit: Acad Affairs Council
Date	Description of Change	
5.22.25	Initial Adoption	

LICENSURE LETTERS

Licensure Letter for Illinois Resident

Dear [Student Name],

We are pleased to inform you that the [Program Name] is a state-approved program that leads to professional licensure upon successful completion of all academic and licensure requirements. Based on your Illinois residence, we are happy to share that, upon completion of the program and meeting all applicable licensure criteria, you would be eligible to apply for licensure in the state of Illinois.

Please note that licensure requirements can vary by state. If you plan to pursue licensure in a state other than Illinois, we encourage you to review the information on our [website](#), that state's specific requirements, or contact the appropriate licensing board to ensure eligibility.

We look forward to supporting your academic and professional development. If you have any questions or need assistance as you begin your journey, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Once again, congratulations and welcome to Shawnee Community College!

Warm regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]

Licensure Verified for an Out-of-State Resident

Dear [Student Name],

We are pleased to inform you that the [Program Name] is an Illinois state-approved program that leads to professional licensure upon successful completion of all academic and licensure requirements.

Based on your state of residence, we have verified that this program meets the educational requirements for licensure in your resident state. Upon successful completion of the program and all applicable licensure requirements, you would be eligible to apply for licensure in your state.

Please be aware that states may occasionally update their licensure standards. We recommend that you remain informed of any such changes and consult your state licensing board for the most current information. You may also find helpful resources on our [website](#) to assist with your licensure planning.

We are excited to support your academic and professional journey. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to reach out.

Congratulations again and welcome to Shawnee Community College!

Warm regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]

Verified Program DOES NOT Prepare for Licensure in the State of Residence or Cannot Determine at this Time

Dear [Student Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [Program Name] at Shawnee Community College. We are proud to offer a program that is fully approved in the state of Illinois and leads to professional licensure upon successful completion of all academic and regulatory requirements.

However, based on your permanent residence in the state of [Student's State], we want to inform you that **we cannot guarantee that the program meets the educational requirements for licensure in your state**. Because licensure requirements vary across states—and often include differences in curriculum, clinical hours, or examinations—we are unable to guarantee that graduates will be eligible for licensure in your home state without additional steps.

Under federal regulations, students in this situation may still enroll **if they attest that they intend to seek employment in a state where the program does meet licensure requirements**.

What you need to do:

1. **Contact the program or the Registrar (registrar@shawneecc.edu)** to determine which states currently recognize this program as meeting their licensure standards.
2. **Complete and return the attached Licensure Attestation Form** indicating your intent to seek employment in one of those states.
3. **Submit the signed form** to the Registrar prior to your initial enrollment.
4. **Consult your state licensing board** for the most current information.
5. You may also find helpful resources on our [website](#) to assist with your licensure planning.

Please know that this attestation must be a meaningful statement of your intent and will become part of your student file. If your plans change in the future, we encourage you to consult with your advisor and the licensing board in your new intended state of employment.

We are here to support you throughout this process and are committed to helping you meet your academic and professional goals.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]

Professional Licensure Attestation Form

If you have been notified by letter that the program for which you have applied does not currently meet the educational requirements for licensure in your state of residence, this attestation form must be completed and returned to the Registrar (registrar@shawneecc.edu) before you can enroll in courses.

Student Information:

Name: _____

Program of Study: _____

Attestation Statement

I, the undersigned, acknowledge the following:

1. I have been informed that the [Program Name] **does not meet** the state educational requirements for licensure or certification in the state of **[Current Residence State]**, where I currently reside and/or am located at the time of my enrollment.
2. I have been informed that the [Program Name] **does meet** the state educational requirements for licensure or certification in the state of _____.
3. I hereby affirm that I **intend to seek employment** in the state of _____ following my completion of this program.
4. I understand that this attestation is being made voluntarily and based on my personal post-graduation plans, and I understand that it allows me to enroll in this program despite my current state's licensure incompatibility.
5. I understand that my intent to seek employment in another state does **not guarantee licensure**, and it remains my responsibility to ensure I meet all licensure requirements of the state in which I ultimately apply for licensure.
6. I confirm that I have received, read, and understood the professional licensure disclosures provided to me by [Institution Name].

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____