

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 451
Regulatory Reform Committee Substitute Adopted 6/17/26

Short Title: Universal Licensure/Limit Continuing Ed. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 25, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REQUIRE CERTAIN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS TO OFFER
UNIVERSAL LICENSURE FOR OUT-OF-STATE LICENSEES AND TO EXEMPT
CERTAIN EXPERIENCED LICENSEES FROM CONTINUING EDUCATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 93B-15.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 93B-15.3. Licensure recognition for individuals licensed in neighboring other states.

(a) Applicability. – This section applies to all occupational licensing boards and State agency licensing boards except as provided in this subsection. This section shall not apply to:

- (1) Licensure of any healthcare practitioner licensed under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- (1a) Clinical social workers licensed under Chapter 90B of the General Statutes.
- (2) ~~Architects licensed under Chapter 83A of the General Statutes.~~
- (3) ~~Certified public accountants licensed under Chapter 93 of the General Statutes.~~
- (4) ~~Engineers licensed under Chapter 89C of the General Statutes.~~
- (5) Veterinarians licensed, or veterinary technicians registered, under Article 11 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.
- (6) Admission to the practice of law or licensure as an attorney under Chapter 84 of the General Statutes.
- (7) Licensure of any practitioner licensed by the North Carolina Pesticide Board under Article 52 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
- (8) Licensure of any practitioner licensed by the North Carolina Structural Pest Control Committee under Article 4C of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes.
- (9) Dealers, salesmen, issuers, investment advisors, investment advisor representatives, ~~and athlete agents~~ athlete agents, and commodity merchants under Chapters 78A, 78C, and 78D of the General Statutes.
- (10) ~~Certification of any practitioner by the North Carolina On-Site Wastewater Contractors and Inspectors Certification Board under Article 5 of Chapter 90A of the General Statutes.~~
- (11) Licensure of any new motor vehicle dealer, used motor vehicle dealer, motor vehicle sales representative, manufacturer, factory branch, factory representative, distributor, distributor branch, distributor representative, or wholesaler under Article 12 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes.
- (12) Certification of sworn law enforcement officers certified pursuant to Chapter 17C, 17E, or 74E of the General Statutes.



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(13) Licensure, certification, or registration for an occupation to the extent that recognition under this section would conflict with minimum standards that federal law requires the State to impose as a condition of licensure.

(14) Licenses issued to a business or facility, rather than to an individual.

(b) Licensure Recognition. – Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an occupational licensing board or a State agency licensing board subject to this section shall issue a license, certification, or registration to any applicant who establishes residence in this State and satisfies all of the following conditions:

(1) ~~The applicant is currently licensed, certified, or registered in Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, or West Virginia another state or United States territory or the District of Columbia in the discipline applied for in this State at the same or substantially equivalent practice level, as determined by the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board.~~ State.

(2) The applicant has been licensed, certified, or registered in one or more of the states listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection or territories or the District of Columbia for at least one year.

(3) The applicant has passed an examination required for the license, certification, or registration in the jurisdiction in which the applicant holds a current license, certification, or registration, if an examination was required.

(4) The applicant is in good standing in all jurisdictions within the United States in which the applicant holds or has ever held a license, certification, or registration in the profession for which the applicant is seeking licensure, certification, or registration in this State.

(5) The applicant has not voluntarily surrendered a license, certification, or registration or had a license, certification, or registration revoked in any jurisdiction within the United States as a result of unprofessional conduct related to the profession for which the applicant is seeking licensure, certification, or registration in this State.

~~(6) The applicant demonstrates competency in the profession through methods determined by the board, which may include having met the minimum education, clinical supervision, or work experience requirements in effect in the originating state at the time the applicant obtained the license, certification, or registration from that state.~~

(7) The applicant does not have any active or pending disciplinary actions from an occupational licensing board or agency in another jurisdiction within the United States and, if applicable, the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board has completed verification under subsection (c) of this section.

(8) The applicant does not have a disqualifying criminal history record, as determined by the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board under G.S. 93B-8.1 and related provisions of law.

(9) The applicant has paid all applicable fees, including fees for application processing, license issuance, verification of credentials, and background checks.

(b1) No Requirement of Substantial Equivalency. – An occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall not require an applicant eligible for universal licensure recognition pursuant to this section to demonstrate that the applicant is licensed at the same or substantially equivalent practice level in another jurisdiction or that the licensure, certification, or registration requirements of another jurisdiction are substantially equivalent to or exceed the requirements of this State.

(b2) Limitation on Additional Requirements. – Except as otherwise required by federal law or by a State law applicable to all applicants for the same credential, an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall not require an applicant eligible for universal licensure recognition pursuant to this section to complete additional education, training, examination, apprenticeship, clinical supervision, supervised practice, or other experience as a condition of licensure, certification, or registration, except that this subsection does not prohibit a board from requiring any of the following:

(1) An examination specific to the laws of this State, if the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board administers an examination on the laws of this State as part of its licensure, certification, or registration requirements for all applicants.

(2) A criminal history record check.

(3) Other administrative requirements imposed on all applicants for the same credential.

(c) Prior Disciplinary Actions. – If the applicant has any prior resolved disciplinary actions from an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board at the time of application, the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board to which the applicant is applying shall determine and verify that the disciplinary action is resolved and, if applicable, corrective action has been taken. If a disciplinary action is pending in another jurisdiction, an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall suspend the application process for any license, certificate, or registration under this section until the disciplinary action has been resolved.

(c1) Notice of Incomplete Application. – If an application for universal licensure recognition under this section is incomplete, the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall notify the applicant in writing within 15 business days after receipt of the application and shall identify with specificity the information needed to complete the application.

(c2) Board Action on Completed Application. – Within 30 days after receipt of a completed application for universal licensure recognition under this section, the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall grant or deny the application. If the application is denied, the board shall provide written notice of the denial and the basis for the denial.

(d) Required Information. – Each occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board shall publish a document that lists the specific criteria or requirements for licensure, certification, or registration by the board under this section and any necessary documentation needed for satisfying the requirements. The information required by this subsection shall be published on the occupational licensing board's or State agency licensing board's website.

(e) Effect on Other Agreements. – Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent any occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board in this State from entering into a reciprocity agreement with another jurisdiction or to invalidate any existing reciprocity agreement between any occupational licensing board or agency in this State and another jurisdiction.

(f) Scope of License. – Any license, certification, or registration granted by an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board to any applicant under this section shall be valid only in this State and does not extend validity to other jurisdictions, including through an interstate compact, unless otherwise provided by law or interstate agreement.

(g) Rights and Obligations. – Any individual who is licensed, certified, or registered under this section shall be entitled to the same rights and subject to the same obligations as required of an individual who was licensed, certified, or registered by an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board in this State under any other provision of law.

(h) Alternative Pathway. – Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit an individual from proceeding under the existing licensure, certification, or registration

requirements established by an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board in this State.

(i) Complaint Procedure. – An applicant who alleges that an occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board has violated this section by failing to act on a completed application within the time required by subsection (c2) of this section or by imposing a requirement prohibited by subsection (b1) or (b2) of this section may file a complaint with the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor shall do all of the following:

- (1) Receive and review complaints filed pursuant to this subsection.
- (2) Provide a copy of the complaint to the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board that is the subject of the complaint and allow the board 10 business days to respond.
- (3) Issue written findings to the applicant and the board within 30 days after receipt of the board's response or, if no response is received, within 40 days after the complaint is filed.
- (4) Include in its written findings any recommendation for corrective action necessary to bring the board into compliance with this section.
- (5) Transmit a copy of its written findings to the Attorney General and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee.

(j) Alternative Relief. – Nothing in this section shall preclude an applicant from seeking judicial review or other relief otherwise available under law.

(k) Universal Licensure Recognition Fee. – An applicant seeking licensure, certification, or registration under this section shall pay a universal license recognition processing fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) to the board from which the applicant is seeking licensure, certification, or registration under this section. The fee shall be in addition to fees for the cost of any criminal history record check, license verification, or other third-party verification required by the occupational licensing board or State agency licensing board. The fee shall be used only to administer this section. The fee shall be waived for an active duty military service member, a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, a member of the North Carolina National Guard, a military veteran who applied within one year of separation from service, or the spouse of a military service member, reserve component member, National Guard member, or military veteran qualifying under this subsection, provided the marriage existed at the time of the service member's discharge, retirement, death, or current active service."

SECTION 2. G.S. 93B-2(f) reads as rewritten:

"(f) Report. – Beginning on ~~October 31, 2026~~, October 31, 2027, each occupational licensing board and State agency licensing board subject to ~~G.S. 93B-15.3~~, as enacted by Section 1(a) of S.L. 2025-61, G.S. 93B-15.3 shall include all of the following data for the previous fiscal year in the annual report to the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee, as required by this section:

- (1) The number of individuals who applied for licensure, certification, or registration in accordance with G.S. 93B-15.3.
- (2) The number of individuals who received licensure, certification, or registration in accordance with G.S. 93B-15.3.
- (3) The number of individuals who were denied licensure, certification, or registration in accordance with G.S. 93B-15.3, including the reasons for denial.
- (4) The average number of days between receipt of a completed application submitted pursuant to G.S. 93B-15.3 and final action on the application.
- (5) The number of complaints filed with the Department of Labor under G.S. 93B-15.3(i) concerning the board and the disposition of those complaints."

1 **SECTION 3.** Chapter 93B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
2 section to read:

3 **"§ 93B-9.1. Continuing education exemption for certain experienced licensees.**

4 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an occupational licensing board or a
5 State agency licensing board shall not require an individual to complete continuing education or
6 other similar recurring training activities as a condition of renewing or maintaining a license,
7 certification, or registration if the individual satisfies both of the following conditions:

8 (1) The individual is 65 years of age or older.

9 (2) The individual has been actively engaged in the practice of the occupation,
10 profession, or activity for which the license, certification, or registration is
11 held in this State for at least 25 years.

12 (b) This section shall not apply to the occupational licensing boards and State agency
13 licensing boards that are exempt from G.S. 93B-15.3, as provided in subsection (a) of that
14 section.

15 (c) Nothing in this section shall prohibit an individual who qualifies for an exemption
16 under this section from voluntarily completing continuing education or similar training
17 activities."

18 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2026. Sections 1 and 2 of this
19 act apply to applications for licensure, certification, or registration received on or after October
20 1, 2026. Section 3 of this act applies to licenses, certifications, and registrations that are active
21 on and after October 1, 2026.