



Word Up: Common Terms in Professional Licensure

Most statutes, regulations and rules have a definition section that specifies what meaning words have for that particular statute or rule. However, not all words will be defined in a definition section. In general, words have their plain meaning in all statutes, regulations and rules, unless specified otherwise. Below is a list of common terminology that you may encounter in a licensure statute, regulation or rule.

Accreditation – a process of evaluation and approval. Degree programs and universities can be accredited by different governmental and private agencies.

Allied Field – a profession related to the license seeking. For example, psychology is sometimes considered an allied field for licensure as a professional counselor.

Approved program – a degree program that meets the requirements for licensure. Approval can be by the governing Board or state Department of Education or a private organization.

Board – group with authority to issue licenses and regulate profession.

CACREP- Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs. CACREP accredits master's and doctoral degree programs in certain counseling fields. Capella has several programs that are CACREP accredited.

COAMFTE-Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education. COAMFTE accredits clinical training programs in marriage and family therapy at the master's, doctoral, and postgraduate levels.

CORE-Council on Rehabilitation Accreditation. CORE accredits rehabilitation counseling training programs.

Credential-legal authority to practice profession. Some states classify a license as a credential.

Credit conversion-ratio used to convert semester credit hours to quarter credit hours or clock hours.

Degree-an award conferred by a college or university signifying that the recipient has satisfactorily completed a course of study. Capella offers degrees at the bachelor's, master's, specialist and doctoral level.

Distance Learning-education for students who are not physically "on site" in a traditional classroom or campus.

Equivalent program-degree program that satisfies the requirements for licensure, even though it is not accredited or approved.

Examination-written or oral evaluation of preparedness. In the licensure context, generally at least one exam must be completed to qualify for a license. These are completed post graduation.

Face-to-face contact-in-person communication. When this term is used in a statute, regulation or rule it acts as a ban on distance-learning.

In residence-in-person learning at a college or university. When this term is used in a statute, regulation or rule it acts as a ban on distance-learning.

Instructional hours-time spent learning material. Can be measured in quarter, credit or clock hours.

Internship-a temporary position with an emphasis on “hands-on” training. Internships provide opportunities for students to gain experience in their field, determine if they have an interest in a particular career, create a network of contacts, or gain school credit. Many Capella programs have required internships.

License-legal authority to practice a certain profession. Licenses are issued by governing Boards or state agencies, such as the Department of Education, in order to ensure that the public will not be harmed by the incompetence of the practitioners.

NASP-National Association of School Psychologists. NASP reviews and approves graduate programs in school psychology that prepare graduate candidates for effective school psychology practice.

Practice-engaging in the activities that define a profession. Generally statute, regulations and rules will define what it means to practice a particular profession.

Practicum- a course, often in a specialized field of study, that is designed to give students supervised practical application of a previously or concurrently studied theory. Many Capella programs have required practica.

Program-area of study, similar to “major”.

Regionally accredited- a college or university which has been evaluated and “approved” by one of the regional accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Capella University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

Supervision-working under the guidance of a licensed professional. Most states have very specific requirements for who can supervise required practicum and internship experiences.