



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Andrea Buccelli,
 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
 2 Deaf Language Specialist
 (PS1128N), Department of Labor and
 Workforce Development

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
 OF THE
 CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2026-1134

ISSUED: July 22, 2026 (SLK)

Andrea Buccelli appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the education requirements for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 2 Deaf Language Specialist (PS1128N), Department of Labor and Workforce Development promotional examination.

The closing date of the examination was July 21, 2025. The education requirements were graduation from an accredited college or university with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Education, Social Work, Counseling, Special Education, School Guidance or Psychology and successful completion of one graduate course in Theories and Techniques of Counseling. Further, a current and valid certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification could have been substituted for the Master's degree. Additionally, a Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Education, Social Work, Counseling, Special Education, School Guidance, Psychology, Business Administration, Human Resources, or Economics and two years of professional work experience with individuals with disabilities or performing direct counseling or advocacy activities for individuals with disabilities in a rehabilitation agency, facility or other social program designed to increase the employability of persons with disabilities, could have been substituted for the above education.

The experience requirements were two years of experience in vocational/rehabilitation guidance or counseling, or other related guidance and counseling, or social or medical casework in a rehabilitation agency, facility, or other social program designed to increase the employability of persons with disabilities. Moreover, appointees must be able to communicate effectively in the language of the deaf, particularly American Sign Language, sufficiently to perform the duties of this position and appointees must have a proficiency level of at least an Intermediate level and must be able to reach the Advanced or higher-level rating on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview within two years of appointment. A total of three applicants applied, and one was determined eligible. There have been no certifications that have been issued. The list expires on October 15, 2027.

On the appellant's application, she indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree in Deaf Studies and 30 credits towards a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Additionally, she listed that for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, she was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 1 Deaf Language Specialist from December 2022 to the July 21, 2025 examination closing date; a Director of Training and Consultation Services for The Arc of Services from March 2022 to December 2022; a Program Manager of Employment Services for Deaf for Alternatives Inc. from August 2021 to January 2022; and an Employment Specialist and Vocational Evaluator for Alternatives Inc. from January 2019 to August 2021. Agency Services credited the appellant for having met the experience requirements,¹ but it determined that she lacked the required education.

On appeal, the appellant contends that the subject examination announcement indicates that either a Master's degree plus one year of professional experience or a Bachelor's degree plus two years of experience meets the requirements.² The appellant highlights that she currently in the process of completing her graduate program in Rehabilitation Counseling as she possesses 36 credits towards a Master's degree. Additionally, she indicates that she possesses a Bachelor's degree in Deaf Studies, with a minor in family and human services. She attaches her transcripts for her undergraduate degree and her graduate program.³ Further, the appellant states that she has seven months of experience in the field, and she attaches a resume.

¹ Agency Services credited the appellant with having five years and four months of experience based on two years and eight months of experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 1 Deaf Language with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and two years and eight months of experience as an Employment Specialist and Vocational Evaluator for Alternatives Inc.

² As indicated above, a review of the announcement indicates that the requirements are a specific Master's degrees plus two years of applicable experience. In the alternative, a specific Bachelor's degree plus two years of experience can substitute for the Master's degree, plus an additional two years of applicable experience would be needed (In other words, the substitution clause requires a specific Bachelor's degree plus four years of applicable experience).

³ A review of the appellant's undergraduate transcript reveals, in relevant part, she took the following courses: Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Special Education, Writing and Communication Skills Teacher, Introduction to Interpreting, Proctoring in Deaf Studies, and Social Services in Deaf Communication.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) requires applicants to possess all the requirements specified in an announcement for an open competitive examination by the closing date. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In this matter, the Division of Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant did not meet the education requirements as of the July 21, 2025 examination closing date. Specifically, while the appellant is working towards a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, she did not possess one as of the closing date. Therefore, she does not meet the education requirement as of the closing date. *See N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.3(b).

Regarding the substitution clause for the Master's degree, the Bachelor's degree needed to be in Rehabilitation Counseling, Education, Social Work, Counseling, Special Education, School Guidance, Psychology, Business Administration, Human Resources, or Economics. It is noted that these are all fields related to vocational counseling. However, the appellant's undergraduate degree, Deaf Studies, while certainly related to the Deaf Language variant, is not a degree that is focused on vocational rehabilitation special education, or counseling which is the base title. Therefore, it cannot substitute for the required education. Moreover, possessing experience beyond the minimum requirements cannot substitute for meeting the education requirements as of the closing date.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 22ND DAY OF JULY, 2026



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