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**NOTICE: Division of Professional Licensure Announces Changes to Licensing Procedures  
for Private Occupational Schools**

The Division of Professional Licensure (“DPL”) today announced several changes to its licensing procedures for private occupational schools, streamlining those processes while also strengthening consumer protections for students.

One important change relates to instructor approvals. By law, instructors at licensed private occupational schools must be approved by the state. Schools were previously required to complete a six-page form for each proposed instructor, accompanied by additional documentation including proof of trade letters and certified transcripts.

Under the new procedures announced today, schools will use a new, two-page form that includes minimal attachments to request instructor approvals. In addition, each school must certify to DPL that they have performed the requisite due diligence regarding the educational and professional qualifications of each proposed instructor, and must also maintain an active file with supporting documentation for each instructor. These changes were adopted following comments from industry stakeholders and other interested parties received at a March 2013 public meeting regarding possible changes to the regulations governing occupational schools.

This new, streamlined review and approval process will also allow DPL resources to be reallocated to enforcement efforts. For example, the school certification file for each instructor is now subject to inspection by DPL at any time. Any false statements discovered on an instructor certification form may lead to the revocation of the instructor’s approval, as well as disciplinary action against the private occupational school. In addition, all instructor approvals will expire on the expiration date of the private occupational school’s license, and must be renewed in conjunction with the school’s license renewal.

Another key licensing reform involves the scope of programs reviewed at licensed private occupational schools. In the past, if a private occupational school was subject to licensure, all of the school’s programs were subject to review and approval, regardless of whether the programs were occupational in nature. Moving forward, DPL will now limit its review, approval, and oversight solely to occupational programs offered by each school.

Finally, in coordination with the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) DPL has adjusted the license renewal timetable so that renewals can be made in a more timely manner. Specifically, licensed private occupational schools are now required to submit financial information to the OSA 90



days in advance of the license expiration date and to submit renewal applications to DPL 60 days in advance of the license expiration date. Previously, these renewal materials were due all at once only 30 days prior to expiration of a school's license. This approach frequently caused significant delays in the renewal process due to the significant number of documents that needed to be reviewed in a short time frame.

The changes announced today, as well as new, forthcoming regulations, are products of a comprehensive DPL review of existing regulations, policies, and procedures initiated after licensing authority for private occupational schools was transferred from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to DPL in August 2012. DPL is assisted by a 12-member Advisory Council on Private Occupational Schools.

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