



The State Bar *of California*

OPEN SESSION

AGENDA ITEM

IV.B. SEPTEMBER 2020

DATE: September 14, 2020

TO: Members, California Board of Legal Specialization

FROM: Amy C. Nuñez, Director, Office of Admissions

SUBJECT: Report on Initial Certification Application Statuses

SUMMARY

A total of 75.3 percent of the applicants who passed the 2017 Legal Specialist Examination (LSX) have filed their initial certification application as of September 1, 2020. The remaining eligible applicants must do so by January 31, 2021 in order to avoid having to take the examination again.

A total of 42.1 percent of the applicants who passed the 2019 LSX have filed their initial certification application as of September 1, 2020. The remaining eligible applicants must do so by April 24, 2021, or request an extension of time.

BACKGROUND

To receive initial certification as a specialist, applicants must comply with a two-part process. Applicants must first pass the Legal Specialization Examination (LSX). Only then do they become eligible to file a post-examination application for initial certification documenting experience, education and references, and they must do so within three years and three months of the original examination date.

Because examination results expire after that amount of time has lapsed, applicants who fail to file their initial certification applications by the extension deadline must take and pass the examination again in order to continue with their eligibility for certification.

DISCUSSION

2017 Successful Examination Applicants

As of September 1, 2020, 530 of the 704 candidates who passed the 2017 LSX have filed their initial certification applications. Attachment A provides a breakdown of those candidates by specialty area. Notably, Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law and Family Law have received the most initial certification applications from 2017 LSX eligible applicants, accounting for more than half of the total received applications.

Remaining candidates had until April 24, 2019 to submit their initial certification application, unless an extension of time to submit their application by January 31, 2021 had been granted. Of the 174 candidates pending filing of the initial certification application, 22 have not yet received an extension.

2019 Successful Examination Applicants

As of September 1, 2020, 127 of the 382 candidates who passed the 2019 LSX have filed their initial certification applications. Attachment B provides a breakdown of those candidates by specialty area. As with the 2017 LSX, Estate Planning, Trust & Probate Law and Family Law have received the most initial certification applications from 2019 LSX eligible applicants, which also account for more than half of the total received applications.

Remaining candidates have until April 24, 2021 to submit their initial certification application, unless an extension of time to submit their application by January 31, 2023 is granted. Of the 255 candidates pending filing of the initial certification application, six have already requested and received an extension.

The most common reason for requesting an extension is to accumulate the minimum five years' time in practice required to become a certified specialist. Candidates are allowed to submit their applications before they meet the five year time-in-practice requirement so that other portions of the application can be evaluated until that requirement is met.

ATTACHMENT(S) LIST

- A. 2017 Post-Examination Initial Certification Applications Filed by Specialty as of September 1, 2020
- B. 2019 Post-Examination Initial Certification Applications Filed by Specialty as of September 1, 2020