

## TITLE 4. ADMISSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Adopted July 2007

### DIVISION 1. ADMISSION TO PRACTICE LAW IN CALIFORNIA

#### Chapter 1. General Provisions

##### Rule 4.1 Authority

The California Supreme Court exercises inherent jurisdiction over the practice of law in California. The Committee of Bar Examiners (“the Committee”) is authorized by law, pursuant to the authority delegated to it by the Board of Trustees, to administer the requirements for admission to practice law; to examine all applicants for admission; and to certify to the Supreme Court for admission those applicants who fulfill the requirements.<sup>1</sup>

*Rule 4.1 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

##### Rule 4.2 Scope of Rules

These rules apply to persons seeking to practice law in California. Nothing in these rules may be construed as affecting the power of the California Supreme Court to exercise its inherent jurisdiction over the practice of law in California.

*Rule 4.2 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

##### Rule 4.3 Definitions

These definitions apply to the rules in this Division unless otherwise indicated.

- (A) An “American Bar Association ~~(ABA)~~ Approved Law School” is a law school fully or provisionally approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) and deemed accredited by the Committee.
- (B) The “Applicant Portal” is the online system for communication and submission of documents between applicants and the State Bar.
- ~~(B)~~ (C) An “attorney applicant” is an applicant who is or has been admitted as an attorney to the practice of law in any jurisdiction.
- ~~(C)~~ (D) The “Attorneys’ Examination” is the version of California Bar Examination ~~for which that~~ attorney applicants may apply to take, provided if they have been admitted to the ~~active~~ practice of law in a United States jurisdiction at least four years immediately prior to the first day of administration of the examination they



have applied to take, and have been an active licensee, eligible to practice, and in  
good standing during that entire period. The Attorneys' Examination includes the  
essay ~~questions~~ and performance test sections ~~tests~~ of the General Bar Examination  
but not the multiple-choice questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Business & Professions Code § 6046.



- ~~(D)~~ (E) A “California accredited law school” is a law school accredited by the Committee but not approved by the American Bar Association.
- ~~(E)~~ (F) The “California Bar Examination” is the examination administered by the Committee that an applicant must pass to be certified to the California Supreme Court as qualified for admission to practice law in California. It may be administered in a version described as the General Bar Examination or a format described as the Attorneys’ Examination. ~~The California Bar Examination includes the General Bar Examination and the Attorneys’ Examination.~~
- ~~(F)~~ (G) “The Committee” is the Committee of Bar Examiners of the State Bar of California or, unless otherwise indicated, a subcommittee of two or more of its members ~~whom~~ which the Committee authorizes to act on its behalf.
- ~~(G)~~ (H) “Director of Admissions” or “Director, Admissions” means the Director of the State Bar Office of Admissions, or that person’s designee.
- ~~(H)~~ (I) A “general applicant” is an applicant who has not been admitted as an attorney to the practice of law in any jurisdiction.
- ~~(I)~~ (J) The “General Bar Examination” is the California Bar Examination required of every general applicant and, as set forth in these rules, certain attorney applicants. The General Bar Examination consists of multiple-choice questions, essay questions, and a performance tests.
- ~~(J)~~ (K) The “First-Year Law Students’ Examination” is a statutorily required the examination that must, to the extent set forth in these rules, be passed by students in California unaccredited law schools, law office study programs, or as otherwise required in order to receive credit for any study beyond the first year of law school.<sup>2</sup> It includes questions on contracts, torts, and criminal law.
- ~~(K)~~ (L) An “informal conference” is ~~defined in Rule 4.45~~ a meeting with an applicant initiated by the State Bar for the purpose of discussing issues relevant to an applicant’s moral character determination.
- ~~(L)~~ (M) The “Office of Admissions” (“Admissions”) is the State Bar office authorized by the Board of Trustees and the Committee to administer examinations and otherwise act on their behalf.
- (N) The “State Bar” includes Office of Admissions (“Admissions”) directors, managers, and staff.
- ~~(M)~~ (O) “Receipt” of a document that the State Bar or Committee sends an applicant is:



a- ~~(1)~~ calculated ~~from~~ as the date of mailing and is deemed to be electronic transmission ~~or five~~ 5 days from the date of mailing to a California address; ~~ten~~ 10 days from the date of mailing to an address elsewhere in the United States; and ~~twenty~~ 20 days from the date of mailing to an address outside the United States; or

b- ~~(2)~~ when the State Bar or Committee delivers a document physically by personal service or otherwise.

~~(N)~~ (P) "Receipt" of a document sent to the State Bar or Committee is when it is physically received at the Office of Admissions or the date of electronic transmission, if permitted to be sent electronically.

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<sup>2</sup> Business & Professions Code § 6060(h).



~~(Q)~~ (Q) An “unaccredited law school” is a correspondence, distance-learning, or fixed-facility law school operating in California that the Committee registers but does not accredit.

~~(P)~~ (R) ~~For purposes of calculating law study credit toward meeting the legal education requirements necessary to qualify to take the First Year Law Students’ Examination and California Bar Examination, a “year” is defined as the law study successfully completed in the time between the same calendar dates for consecutive calendar years, minus one day.~~

*Rule 4.3 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective July 22, 2011; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.4 Confidentiality**

Applicant records are confidential unless required to be disclosed by law;<sup>3</sup> required by the State Bar’s Executive Director, Chief Trial Counsel, or General Counsel to fulfill their responsibilities for regulation of the practice of law; or authorized by the applicant in writing for release to others.

*Rule 4.4 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*

#### **Rule 4.5 Submissions**

- (A) All documents filed or submitted with the State Bar or Committee pursuant to these rules, including but not limited to an application or request to the Office of Admissions, must be completed according to instructions; ~~verified or~~ made under penalty of perjury;<sup>4</sup> and submitted with any required fee.
- (B) A document, ~~which must be complete as defined by the instructions for filing~~, is deemed submitted upon receipt, either physically or electronically. A document must be complete as defined by the instructions to be deemed filed. The State Bar determines when a document is complete. filed upon receipt.
- (C) (1) Applicants shall use the Applicant Portal to submit all documents and information with the State Bar or Committee pursuant to these rules or as applications, documents, and requests to the Office of Admissions, and other information as required by the Office of Admissions. The State Bar shall provide alternative means of submission of documents and information for applicants who cannot use the Applicant Portal or when otherwise appropriate.  
(2) The State Bar maintains on the Applicant Portal a current description of the status of applicant submissions where appropriate.
- (D) The information obtained by the State Bar as a result of the fingerprinting of an applicant shall be used for establishing the identity of the applicant, determining the



character and fitness of the applicant, in discovering prior and subsequent criminal arrests of an applicant and as otherwise set forth in Business and Professions Code section 6064,~~used to establish identity of the applicant, to determine the moral character of the applicant, and to disclose records history of the applicant in California or elsewhere.~~ Any information obtained as a result of fingerprint submission is confidential and for official use of the Committee and the State Bar.

- (E) Information on an examination application that is not required, but is submitted voluntarily by an applicant, including ~~ethnic survey and identification information furnished with applications to take the California Bar Examination~~ demographic data or other identifying information, is separated from the applications at

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<sup>3</sup> Evidence Code § 1040, Business & Professions Code §§ 6044.5, 6060.2, 6060.25, 6086.1, and 6090.6.

<sup>4</sup> Code of Civil Procedure § 2015.5.



initial processing and may not be associated with applicants, their files, or their examination answers during grading ~~unless there is reasonable doubt about the identity of a person taking an examination and the State Bar requires the information to verify identity.~~

*Rule 4.5 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective July 22, 2011; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.6 Investigations and hearings**

In conducting an investigation or hearing, the Committee or the State Bar Court may receive evidence; administer oaths and affirmations; and compel by subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents.

*Rule 4.6 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*

#### **Rule 4.7 Statistics**

The State Bar may publish statistics for each examination in accordance with its policies.

*Rule 4.7 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.8 Extensions of time**

The time limits for State Bar or Committee actions specified in these rules are norms for processing. The time limits are not jurisdictional and the State Bar or Committee may extend them for good cause.

*Rule 4.8 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.9 Review by Supreme Court**

An applicant refused certification to the Supreme Court of California for admission to practice law in California may have the action of the Committee reviewed by the Supreme Court of California in accordance with its procedures.

*Rule 4.9 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*

#### **Rule 4.10 Fees**

Applicants shall pay reasonable fees, fixed by the Board of Trustees, for services such as application filing, reports, copying documents and providing letters of verification.

*Rule 4.10 adopted effective November 14, 2009; previously amended effective January 1, 2012; amended effective September 1, 2019.*



## Chapter 2. Overview Of Admission Requirements

### Rule 4.15 Certification to California Supreme Court

To be eligible for certification to the California Supreme Court for admission to the practice of law, an applicant for admission must:

- (A) be at least eighteen years of age;
- (B) file an Application for Admission with the State Bar;
- ~~(C)~~ meet the requirements of these rules and applicable law regarding: education or admission as an attorney in another jurisdiction, determination of moral character, and examinations;
- (D) ~~be in compliance with~~ not be identified on the certified list of those out of compliance with California court-ordered child or family support obligations provided by the Department of Child Support Services pursuant to Family Code section 17520;
- (E) not be identified on the certified list of certain tax delinquents provided to the State Bar by the State Board of Equalization or the Franchise Tax Board pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 494.5 ~~be in compliance with tax obligations pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 494.5;~~
- (F) until admitted to the practice of law, notify the State Bar within thirty days of any change in information provided on any document submitted to the State Bar, including, as set forth in rule 4.42, information included in an application for determination of moral character ~~an application;~~ and
- (G) otherwise meet statutory criteria for certification to the Supreme Court.<sup>5</sup>

*Rule 4.15 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective January 17, 2014; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

### Rule 4.16 Application for Admission

- (A) An Application for Admission consists of an Application for Registration, an Application for Determination of Moral Character, and an application for any required examination. Each application must be submitted with the required documentation and the fees set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines. The State Bar determines when an application is complete.
- (B) The Application for Registration must be approved, before any other application is submitted. The applicant is required by law either to provide a Social Security Number<sup>6</sup> on the application or to request an exemption because of ineligibility for a Social



Security Number.<sup>7</sup> Registration is deemed abandoned if all required documentation and fees have not been received within sixty days of submittal. No refund ~~is~~ shall be issued for an Application for Registration that has been approved or an abandoned registration.

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<sup>5</sup> Business & Professions Code §§ 6060, 6062.

<sup>6</sup> Business & Professions Code § 30, ~~Family Code § 17520~~.

<sup>7</sup> Business & Professions Code § 6060.6, Family Code § 17520.



- (C) After approval of the Application for Registration, an applicant for admission may submit an Application for Determination of Moral Character, an application for any examination as required by these rules or statute, and any other document ~~or petition~~ permitted by these rules.

*Rule 4.16 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective November 14, 2009; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.17 Admission certification and time limit**

- (A) No later than five years from the ~~last~~ first day of administration of the California Bar Examination the applicant passes;
- (1) an applicant must meet all requirements for admission for certification by the Committee to the California Supreme Court; and
  - (2) upon receipt of an order from the Court, take the attorney's oath and meet State Bar registration requirements to be eligible to practice law in California.
- (B) The State Bar may extend this five-year limit upon a showing, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the applicant diligently attempted to complete all requirements for admission and take the attorney's oath before the expiration of the five-year period.
- (1) Applicants shall be considered to have diligently attempted to complete all requirements for admission under this rule if they allotted an objectively reasonable period of time to complete the unsatisfied requirements before the expiration of the five-year period for good cause. For purposes of this rule, whether the applicant's action was objectively reasonable shall be viewed from the standpoint of a hypothetical reasonable person, without considering the subjective viewpoint of the applicant. The following shall not be deemed reasonable:
    - (a) Waiting until the last opportunity to take the MPRE prior to the expiration of the five-year period.
    - (b) Submitting an application for determination of moral character, or an application for extension of determination of moral character, when the time remaining on the five-year period is less than the minimum period identified on the State Bar website for completion of the moral character review period.
    - (c) Relying on the minimum period identified on the State Bar website for completion of the moral character review when there are issues in the applicant's background that are likely to extend the moral character review process, including but not limited to: recent criminal history, discipline on a professional license, unauthorized practice of



law, or abuse of the legal process.

- (2) The five-year period shall not be extended, ~~shown by clear and convincing evidence in a particular case but not~~ for an applicant's negligence or neglect or the result of an applicant having received a negative moral character determination or insufficient score on the MPRE.
- (C) An applicant may request that a review by the Committee ~~review of~~ the State Bar's decision within 30 days of service of the notice of decision.
- (D) The five years set forth in subsection (A) shall expire as of 11:59 p.m. five years from the first day of the administration of the exam that the applicant passes. If that date falls on a weekend or State Bar holiday, five years shall expire as of 11:59 p.m. on the following business day.

*Rule 4.17 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective November 14, 2009; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

### **Chapter 3. Required Education**

#### **Rule 4.25 General education**

Before beginning the study of law, a general applicant must have completed at least two years of college work or have demonstrated equivalent intellectual achievement, which must be certified by the law school the applicant is attending upon request by the Office of Admissions ~~the Committee.~~

- ~~(A) "Two years of college work" means a minimum of sixty semester or ninety quarter units of college credit~~
  - (1) a minimum of sixty semester or ninety quarter units of college credit equivalent to at least half that required for a bachelor's degree from a college or university that has degree-granting authority from the state in which it is located; ~~and~~ or
  - (2) two years of graduate level coursework, verified by a Committee-approved credential evaluation service; and
  - (3) completed with a grade point average adequate for graduation from all issuing institutions.
- (B) "Demonstrated equivalent intellectual achievement" means achieving acceptable scores on Committee-specified examinations prior to beginning the study of law.

*Rule 4.25 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*



## Rule 4.26 Legal education

General applicants for the California Bar Examination must:

- (A) have received a juris doctor (J.D.) degree, or bachelor of laws (LL.B) degree from a law school approved by the American Bar Association or accredited by the Committee verified by an official transcript or certified by the degree granting institution; or
- (B) ~~demonstrate that in accordance with these rules and the requirements of Business & Professions Code §6060(e)(2) they~~ have studied law diligently and in good faith for at least four years:
  - (1) ~~studied law diligently and in good faith for at least four years~~ in a law school registered with the Committee during which they met the required number of hours as set forth in Rule 4.27, as verified by the law school. To demonstrate the study was diligent and in good faith, the applicant must show at least four years in which they made sufficient academic progress to proceed to the next year in the law school where the study occurred or that they were in good academic standing as defined according to the law school's policies, guidelines, or regulations;
  - (2) in a law office or; in a judge's chambers pursuant to Rule 4.29 and Rule 4.29.5; or
  - (3) by some combination of the these methods set forth in subparagraphs (1)-(2); or
  - (4) ~~(2)~~ met the equivalency requirements of these rules for legal education in a foreign state or country; and
- (C) have passed or established exemption from the First-Year Law Students' Examination.

*Rule 4.26 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective July 22, 2011.*

## Rule 4.27 Study in ~~a fixed facility~~ an unaccredited law school

- (A) To receive credit for one year of law study in a fixed-facility unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring classroom attendance by its students for a minimum of 270 hours. To receive credit for one-half year of study in a fixed-facility unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring classroom attendance by its students for a minimum of 135 hours in a six-month period.
- (B) To receive credit for one year of law study by correspondence or distance learning in an unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring at least 864 hours of preparation and study over no fewer than forty-eight and no more than fifty-two consecutive weeks in one year evidenced by a transcript that indicates the date each course began and ended.



~~(B)~~ To receive credit for one-half year of law study by correspondence or distance learning in an unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring at least 432 hours of preparation and study over no fewer than twenty-four and no more than twenty-six consecutive weeks, evidenced by a transcript that indicates the date each course began and ended.

~~To receive credit, a student studying by correspondence or distance learning may not begin a subsequent year of study prior to completion of one year of study as defined in rule 4.3(P) of these rules.~~

(C) Periods of study must be distinct and not overlap.

(D) For purposes of calculating law study credit under this rule, a “year” is defined as the law study successfully completed in the time between the same calendar dates for consecutive calendar years, minus one day.

*Rule 4.27 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*



#### **Rule 4.28 Study by correspondence or distance learning**

- ~~(A) To receive credit for one year of study by correspondence or distance learning in an unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring at least 864 hours of preparation and study over no fewer than forty eight and no more than fifty two consecutive weeks in one year evidenced by a transcript that indicates the date each course began and ended.~~
- ~~(B) To receive credit for one half year of study by correspondence or distance learning in an unaccredited law school registered with the Committee, a student must receive passing grades in courses requiring at least 432 hours of preparation and study over no fewer than twenty four and no more than twenty six consecutive weeks, evidenced by a transcript that indicates the date each course began and ended.~~
- ~~(C) To receive credit, a student studying by correspondence or distance learning may not begin a subsequent year of study prior to completion of one year of study as defined in rule 4.3(P) of these rules.~~

*Rule 4.28 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective July 22, 2011.*

#### **Rule 4.28 Restarting Legal Studies**

- (A) A law student who attended an ABA-approved, California-accredited, or California-unaccredited law school, or, pursuant to Rule 4.29, studied in a law office or judge's chambers and who restarts their legal studies as a first-year law student at the same or another law school or with another supervisor in a law office or judge's chambers, will not receive any credit for prior law study for purposes of determining eligibility for or exemption from the First-Year Law Students' Examination, eligibility to take the California Bar Examination, or other purposes set forth in these rules.
- (B) Law students who seek to restart their legal studies as first-year law students must certify, on a form approved by the Office of Admissions, their intent to restart legal studies, submit payment of the appropriate fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines, and certify they have read and understand paragraph (A) of this rule.
- (C) Once the form is approved it may not be withdrawn or rescinded. The student will be notified upon approval.

#### **Rule 4.29 Study in a law office or judge's chambers (informational only; no changes proposed; reflects the current language of the rule)**

- (A) A person who intends to comply with the legal education requirements of these rules by study in a law office or judge's chambers must:
  - (1) submit the required form with the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines within thirty days of beginning study;



- (2) submit semi-annual reports, as required by section (B)(5) below on the Committee's form with the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines within thirty days of completion of each six-month period; and
  - (3) have studied law in a law office or judge's chambers during regular business hours for at least eighteen hours each week for a minimum of forty-eight weeks to receive credit for one year of study or for at least eighteen hours a week for a minimum of twenty-four weeks to receive credit for one-half year of study.
- (B) The attorney or judge with whom the applicant is studying must
  - (1) be admitted to the active practice of law in California and be in good standing for a minimum of five years;



- (2) provide the Committee within thirty days of the applicant's beginning study an outline of a proposed course of instruction that he or she will personally supervise;
- (3) personally supervise the applicant at least five hours a week;
- (4) examine the applicant at least once a month on study completed the previous month;
- (5) report to the Committee every six months on the Committee's form the number of hours the applicant studied each week during business hours in the law office or chambers; the number of hours devoted to supervision; specific information on the books and other materials studied, such as chapter names, page numbers, and the like the name of any other applicant supervised and any other information the Committee may require; and
- (6) not personally supervise more than two applicants simultaneously.

*Rule 4.29 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective November 14, 2009.*

**Rule 4.29.5 Demonstration of diligent and good faith study in a law office or judge's chambers study program**

- (A) For purposes of meeting the requirements of Rule 4.26, each semi-annual report submitted pursuant to paragraph (B)(5) of Rule 4.29, shall include an attestation by the attorney or judge with whom the student is studying stating whether the student has demonstrated sufficient academic progress to proceed to the next six-month study period. The student shall not proceed to the next six-month study period until the attorney or judge with whom the student is studying provides such an attestation.
- (B) If the attorney or judge indicates that the student has not demonstrated sufficient academic progress, the student shall have twelve months from the conclusion of the six-month study period to submit a revised semi-annual report in which the supervisor attests that the student completed a remedial study plan and demonstrates sufficient academic progress to proceed to the next six-month study program.
- (C) A student who fails to demonstrate sufficient academic progress to proceed to the next six-month study period may restart their legal studies pursuant to rule 4.28.

**Rule 4.30 Legal education in a foreign state or country**

- (A) Except as specified in paragraph (C), persons who have a first degree in law from a law school in a foreign state or country may qualify to sit for the Bar Exam as general applicants if they satisfy subparagraphs (1) and (2):



- (1) (a) obtain, from a Committee-approved credential evaluation service, a certificate that their first degree in law is substantially equivalent to a J.D. degree from a law school approved by the ABA or from a California-accredited law school or that their first degree in law meets the educational requirements for admission to practice law in the foreign state or country in which was obtained; or  
(b) obtain from the LSAC Credential Assembly Service an International Credential Evaluation for Master of Laws (LL.M.) applicants, affirming that the applicant's first degree in law is substantially equivalent to a J.D. awarded by an ABA Approved Law School or from a California-accredited law school or meets the educational requirements for admission to practice in that country.
  - (2) have completed a minimum of 20 semester or equivalent units of legal education in a LL.M. degree-granting or non-degree granting program, or a non-degree granting J.D. program from ~~have studied law in a law school in a foreign state or country may qualify as general applicants provided that they~~
- A. ~~have a first degree in law, acceptable to the Committee, from a law school in the foreign state or country and have completed a year of legal education at an ABA American Bar Association Approved Law School or a California-accredited law school in areas of law prescribed by the Committee.~~
- (a) The 20 semester units must include at least 12 semester units comprised of three separate courses on subject matters tested on the California Bar Exam and one course on professional responsibility that covers the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, and leading federal and state case law on professional responsibility.
  - (b) The degree or the course work must be awarded or completed, as applicable, within 36 consecutive months of the date the applicant began qualifying study at a law school, whether or not the LL.M degree is awarded or the course work is completed at that law school. For purposes of this paragraph, an applicant begins study on the first day of their first semester or term of qualifying study.
- (B) Except as specified in paragraph (C), persons who have a legal education from a law school located in a foreign state or country without a first degree in law, acceptable to the Committee, and may qualify to sit for the Bar Exam as general applicants if they:
- (1) have satisfied the general education requirements by either of the methods described in Rule 4.25;
  - (2) have studied law as permitted by these rules in a law school, in a law office or judge's chambers, or by any combination of these methods
    - (a) {up to one year of legal education credit may be awarded for foreign law study completed that is substantially equivalent to the education that would be received in a law school approved by the ABA or from a California-accredited law school, as determined by a the Committee-approved credential evaluation service; and



- (3) have passed the First-Year Law Students' Examination in accordance with these rules and Committee policies, unless exempt from that requirement. In addition to the exemptions otherwise specified in these rules, individuals who passed the bar examination(s) of a country in which the common law of England constitutes the basis of jurisprudence are exempt from the requirement to sit for the First-Year Law Students' Exam upon submission of proof of passage subject to approval by the Office of Admissions.
- (C) An applicant who is classified by the government of the United States as a refugee and who is unable to obtain the documentation required under this rule for reasons related to the applicant's refugee status may request that the State Bar waive submission of the required documents otherwise required to register as a foreign-educated law student and sit for the bar exam as a general applicant, if appropriate. As part of the request, the applicant must document their efforts to obtain the required documents, submit notarized photocopies of the documents in the applicant's possession, and submit five (5) letters of reference from persons who can certify the applicant's education, qualifications, and experience. If the State Bar denies the applicant's request for a waiver, the applicant may request an appeal of the decision at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting that is at least 30 days after the date of the receipt of the request.

#### **4.30.5 Requirements for Attorneys Licensed in a Foreign State or Country**

- (A) Persons who have received a legal education in a foreign state or country and are admitted to practice law in a foreign state or country may qualify to sit for the bar exam as general applicants if they have submitted a Certificate of Admission or Certificate of Good Standing which:
- (1) Was issued by the highest professional bar admission regulation or licensing authority in the jurisdiction; and
  - (2) permits them to practice law without restriction.
- (B) If the Office of Admissions determines that the certificate submitted does not meet the requirements of paragraph (A), the applicant may request the Committee to review the determination of the Office of Admissions. The request shall be heard at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting that is at least 30 days after the date of the receipt of the request.
- (D) An applicant who is classified by the government of the United States as a refugee and who is unable to obtain the documentation required under this rule for reasons related to the applicant's refugee status may request that the State Bar waive submission of the required documents otherwise required to register as a foreign licensed attorney and sit for the bar exam. As part of the request, the applicant must document their efforts to obtain the required documents, submit notarized photocopies of the documents in the applicant's possession, and submit five (5) letters of reference from persons who can certify the applicant's education, qualifications and experience. If the State Bar denies the waiver, the applicant may request an appeal of the decision at the next regularly



scheduled Committee meeting that is at least 30 days after the date of the receipt of the request.

*Rule 4.30 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*



#### **Rule 4.31 Credit for law study after passing the First-Year Law Students' Examination**

~~(A)~~ An applicant who is required to pass the First-Year Law Students' Examination will not receive credit for any law study until the applicant passes the examination. An applicant who passes the examination within three consecutive administrations of first becoming eligible to take the examination, will receive credit for all law study completed to the date of the administration of the examination passed, subject to any restrictions otherwise covered by these rules. An applicant who does not pass the examination within three consecutive administrations of first becoming eligible to take the examination but who subsequently passes the examination will receive credit for their ~~his or her~~ first year of law study only.

~~(B) If any of the first three administrations of the First-Year Law Students' Examination described in paragraph (A) includes the June 2020 administration, that examination shall not be counted towards the requirements set forth in paragraph (A).~~

*Rule 4.31 adopted effective November 14, 2009; amended effective January 1, 2021.*

#### **Rule 4.32 Repeated courses**

The Committee does not recognize credit for repetition of a course or substantially the same course.

*Rule 4.32 adopted as Rule 4.31 effective September 1, 2008; renumbered as Rule 4.32 effective November 14, 2009.*

#### **Rule 4.33 Evaluation of study completed or contemplated**

~~An applicant may request that the Committee determine whether general or legal education contemplated or completed by the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of these rules for beginning the study of law, the First-Year Law Students' Examination or the California Bar Examination. The request must be submitted on the required form with certified transcripts and the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines. A written response indicating whether or not the education is sufficient will be issued within sixty days of receipt of the request~~

- (A) An applicant may request that the Office of Admissions determine whether general education completed by the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of these rules for beginning the study of law.
- (B) An applicant may request that the Office of Admissions determine whether legal education contemplated by the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of these rules for the First-Year Law Students' Examination or the California Bar Examination.
- (C) An applicant may request that the Office of Admissions determine whether legal education completed by the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of these rules for the First-Year Law Students' Examination or the California Bar Examination.
- (D) A request for evaluation of study completed or contemplated must be submitted on the required form(s) with official transcripts and the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines
- (E) The Office of Admissions shall, within 60 days after receipt of the request, transmit a response in writing indicating whether or not the education meets the applicable eligibility



requirements of these rules.

- (F) Within 30 days of receipt of the Office of Admissions' determination under paragraphs (A-C), the applicant may request review by the Committee of Bar Examiners. The request shall be heard at the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting that is at least 30 days after the date of receipt of the request.
- (G) Any proposed plan of study submitted subsequent to a determination on the request for evaluation shall be accompanied by the fee set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines.

*Rule 4.33 adopted as Rule 4.32 effective September 1, 2008; renumbered as rule 4.33 effective November 14, 2009.*



## Chapter 5. Examinations

### Rule 4.55 First-Year Law Students' Examination requirement

(A) A general applicant intending to seek admission to practice law in California must take the First-Year Law Students' Examination unless the applicant:

- (1) has satisfactorily completed:
  - (a) at least two years of college work as defined by these rules ~~and the Committee's guidelines~~; and
  - (b) the full first-year course of instruction at an ABA-approved or Committee-accredited law school, ~~and~~ the law school ~~has~~ advanced the applicant, whether or not on probation, to ~~the~~ a second-year of instruction; or
- ~~(i) was at law schools that were as approved by the American Bar Association or accredited by the Committee when the study was begun or completed; and~~
- ~~(ii) the law school has advanced the person, whether or not on probation, to the second-year of instruction; or~~
- (2) is exempt by reason of study in a foreign law school as provided by these rules.
  - has passed the bar examination of a sister state or of a country in which the common law of England constitutes the basis of jurisprudence.

~~(B) An applicant who passes the First-Year Law Students' Examination will receive credit for~~

- ~~(1) all law study completed upon passing the examination within three administrations of the examination after first becoming eligible to take it; or~~
- ~~(2) the first year of law study only upon passing the examination after more than three administrations of the examination after first becoming eligible to take it.~~

*Rule 4.55 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective July 22, 2011.*

### Rule 4.56 First-Year Law Students' Examination

The First-Year Law Students' Examination is given each year in June and October remotely and/or at test centers in California designated by the State Bar. ~~The State Bar develops the questions.~~ Pursuant to the authority delegated to it by the Board of Trustees, the Committee determines the examination's format, scope, topics, content, grading process, and passing score.

*Rule 4.56 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective July 22, 2011; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

### Rule 4.57 Exempt applicants taking First-Year Law Students' Examination

An applicant who is exempt from the First-Year Law Students' Examination requirement may apply for and take the examination. Failing the examination does not affect the applicant's status under these rules.

*Rule 4.57 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*



#### **Rule 4.58 Application for the First-Year Law Students' Examination**

(A) Except as specified in paragraph (B), an application to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination in June must be submitted by April 1—and an application to take the examination in October must be submitted by August 1. Applications received after these deadlines and by May 15 or September 15 are subject to a late fee. Applications are not accepted after those dates. Application fees and late fees are set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines. If a deadline falls on a weekend or State Bar holiday non-business-day, the deadline will be the next business day.

~~(B) Notwithstanding paragraph (A), the State Bar shall establish and publish Different deadlines for initial filing and late fees apply to applicants who fail the First- Year Law Students' Examination and intend to take the next scheduled examination. The exam application will open for those who fail the First-Year Law Students' Examination on the same day results are released. These deadlines are set forth in the notice of examination results and are more than ten days from the date those results are released.~~

(C) Applications are deemed abandoned and ineligible for a refund of fees if:

- (1) they are deemed to be incomplete or unsigned for any reason by the final examination application filing deadline;
- (2) the applicant has not provided additional information requested or eligibility documents have not been received by the final eligibility deadline; or
- (3) eligibility cannot be determined by the final eligibility deadline.

~~(C) Applications that are unsigned or incomplete for any reason as of the final examination application filing deadline are deemed abandoned and ineligible for a refund of fees.~~

~~(D) Applications for which eligibility documents have not been received by the date set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines are abandoned and ineligible for a refund of fees.~~

*Rule 4.58 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective November 14, 2009.*

#### **Rule 4.59 Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination**

Every applicant must take and pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, and receive a passing score as determined by the Committee. The examination may be taken following completion of the first year of law study or later. The Committee must receive official notice of an MPRE passing score before an applicant is deemed to have passed the examination.

*Rule 4.59 adopted effective September 1, 2008; amended effective July 22, 2011.*

#### **Rule 4.60 California Bar Examination**



- (A) The California Bar Examination is given each year in February and July at test centers in California designated by the State Bar. Pursuant to the authority delegated to it by the Board of Trustees, the Committee determines the examination's format, scope, topics, content, questions, and grading process.
- (B) The State Bar provides the California Supreme Court a report on each administration of the examination as soon as practical.

*Rule 4.60 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective July 22, 2011; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.61 Applications for the California Bar Examination**

- (A) Applications for the California Bar Examination are available March 1 for the July examination and October 1 for the February examination. To avoid imposition of a late fee, an application must be submitted no later than April 1 for the July examination or November 1 for the February examination. Applications received after these deadlines and by June 1 or January 1 are subject to late fees. Applications are not accepted after those dates. Application fees and late fees are set forth in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines. If a deadline falls on a weekend or State Bar holiday, the deadline will be the next business day.
- (B) Different deadlines for initial filing and late fees apply to applicants who fail the California Bar Examination and intend to take the next scheduled examination. These deadlines are set forth in the notice of examination results and are a minimum of ten days from the date those results are released.
- (C) Applications are deemed abandoned and ineligible for a refund of fees if:
  - (1) they are deemed to be incomplete ~~or unsigned~~ for any reason by the final examination application filing deadline;
  - (2) the applicant has not provided additional information requested or documentation required by these rules has not been received by the final eligibility deadline; or
  - (3) eligibility cannot be determined by the final eligibility deadline.

*Rule 4.61 adopted effective September 1, 2008; previously amended effective November 14, 2009; amended effective September 1, 2019.*

#### **Rule 4.62 Access to examination answers and scores**

- (A) Within sixty days of the release of examination results, examination answers to the written portions of the examination are returned to applicants for admission who have failed the California Bar Examination or who have passed or failed the First-Year Law



Students' Examination. This provision does not apply to the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination or the multiple-choice portion of the First-Year Law Students' Examination and California Bar Examination.

- (B) Applicants who pass the California Bar Examination are not entitled to receive their examination answers or to see their scores.

*Rule 4.62 adopted effective September 1, 2008.*



TITLE 4, DIVISION 1

ADMISSIONS FEES

<i>Rule</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
4.16	Application for registration – General Applicant	\$119.00	Not applicable
4.16	Application for registration - Attorney Applicant	\$214.00	Not applicable
<u>4.28</u>	<u>Start Over Form</u>	<u>\$ 100.00</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
4.29	Intention to Study Law in Law Office or Judge's Chambers*	\$158.00	Not applicable
4.29	Law Office or Judge's Chambers Initial Study and Semi-Annual Report*	\$105.00	Not applicable
<u>4.32</u> <u>4.33(A)</u>	Evaluation of <u>Pre-Legal</u> Study Completed or <u>Contemplated</u> *	\$100.00	Not applicable
<u>4.33 (B) –(C)</u>	Evaluation of Legal Study Completed or <u>Contemplated</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
<u>4.33(G)</u>	<u>Proposed Plan of Study</u>	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>Not applicable</u>
4.41	Application for Determination of Moral Character	\$551.00	Not applicable
4.47	Appeal of Adverse Determination of Moral Character	\$500.00	Not applicable
4.52	Application for Extension of Determination of Moral Character	\$265.00	Not applicable
4.58	Application to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination	\$624.00	Not applicable
4.58	Late Fee for Application to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination (Filed Between the First and Last Business Days of April for June Administration and Between the First and Last Business Days of August for the October Administration)*	\$25.00	Not applicable
4.58	Late Fee for Application to take the First-Year Law Students' Examination (Filed Between the Last Business Day of April and May 15 for the June Administration and Between the Last Business Day of August and September 15 for the October Administration)*	\$200.00	Not applicable
4.58/4.61	Laptop Computer Fee	\$153.00	Not applicable
4.58/4.61	Late Laptop Computer Fee (Request Received Subsequent to Filing Application to take the Examination)*	\$15.00	Not applicable
4.61	Application to take the California Bar Examination – General Applicant	\$677.00	Not applicable
4.61	Application to take the California Bar Examination – Attorney Applicant	\$983.00	Not applicable