



## **LOUISIANA BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION APPELLATE PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization (the “Board”) by the Supreme Court of Louisiana, the Board, on the recommendation of the Appellate Practice Advisory Commission (the “Advisory Commission”), prescribes the following standards and requirements for Board certification in Appellate Practice in accordance with the Plan of Legal Specialization (the “Plan”) and Rules and Regulations of the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization (the “Rules”).

### **Section I. DEFINITIONS**

- A. The practice of law means full-time legal work performed for the purpose of rendering legal advice or legal representation to the general public, private employers, or governmental agencies.
- B. Full time shall be defined as working a minimum of 35 hours per week.
- C. Appellate Practice is defined as the practice of law involving matters brought before a Louisiana or federal appellate court;
- D. Certification as a specialist shall be effective the date the Board authorizes recognition and shall remain effective for five (5) years from January 1 of the year of recognition.

### **Section II. BASIC REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Application**

Applicants must at the time of initial application for certification:

- 1. Be an active member in good standing of the Louisiana State Bar Association;
- 2. Have a minimum of five (5) years of actual practice of law on a full time basis preceding the year of application;
- 3. Certify under oath that during 48 of the 60 months immediately preceding the year of application they have devoted a minimum of 25% of a full-time work schedule in the practice of law in the field of appellate practice as defined in Section I.C.
- 4. Have served as lead counsel, or had substantial responsibility in, 20 or more appellate matters at the time of application. Applicants who have served on the appellate bench for three (3) or more years in the five (5) years immediately preceding the date of application are exempted from this requirement;
- 5. Have presented at least five (5) oral arguments over the course of their professional careers. The five oral arguments must be in an appellate court (including the Louisiana Supreme Court or the U.S. Supreme Court). They can be in appeals or on writ applications where oral argument is granted or referred to the merits. Applicants who have served on the appellate

bench for three (3) or more years in the five (5) years immediately preceding the date of application are exempted from this requirement;

6. The Advisory Commission must receive on behalf of an applicant, on a form furnished by the Louisiana Board of Legal Specialization, a minimum of five (5) reference statements from practicing attorneys who can attest to the applicant's competence in the specialty field of appellate practice. Of the five (5) references, at least one (1) must be from a Board Certified Appellate Practice Specialist. These submissions shall be subject to the limitations outlined in Rule 8.4 of the Rules;
7. Consent to a confidential inquiry by the Board and/or the Advisory Commission, directed to any person who serves as a reference for the applicant, and to other persons regarding the applicant's competence and qualifications to be recognized as an Appellate Practice Specialist. This inquiry and review shall consider information furnished by references and other information that the Advisory Commission deems relevant to whether the applicant has sufficient competence and proficiency handling the usual matters of appellate practice. This information may include the applicant's work product, ethics, reputation, professionalism, or such other criteria that the Advisory Commission deems appropriate to consider in reaching its recommendations;
8. Comply with the rules and regulations established by the Board as they relate to release of disciplinary action information;
9. Obtain by December 31 of the year of application a minimum of 15 hours of continuing legal education (CLE) in the field of appellate law. All CLE credits of an applicant must be approved by the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Committee ("MCLE Committee") and the Advisory Commission. CLE earned in prior years may not be used to satisfy the 15 hour requirement within the year of application. An applicant will not qualify for the specialization CLE exemption under Rule 7.10 of the Rules in the year of application.
10. Maintain professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 and the policy must be offered by a company reasonably acceptable to the Board. Evidence of insurance shall be provided with the application.
11. Take and pass a written examination.
12. Certify under oath to having met these requirements.

B. Maintenance

Those bar members certified in the Appellate Practice specialty must satisfy the following requirements to maintain their certifications:

1. Be an active member in good standing of the Louisiana State Bar Association;
2. Certify under oath, on a form provided by the Board, that they engage in the actual practice of law on a full time basis;
3. Certify under oath, on a form provided by the Board, that they have devoted a minimum of 25% of a full time work schedule in the practice of law annually in the field of appellate practice, as defined in Section I.C herein.

4. During each year of certification, must attend a minimum of 15 hours of approved appellate law continuing legal education programs that comply with Section III below and the Supreme Court of Louisiana Rules for Continuing Legal Education. Up to eight (8) hours of approved appellate law specialization CLE earned in excess of the 15 hour minimum required per year will be permitted to carry forward to the subsequent year, but may not be carried forward from the application year.
5. Maintain professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000, unless waived for good cause by the Board. The policy must be offered by a company reasonably acceptable to the Board. Proof of insurance shall be provided annually with payment of the annual and dues upon request.
6. Pay all fees required by the Rules.

C. Recertification

1. Recertification as a Board Certified Appellate Practice Specialist shall be required every five (5) years from the date of certification or recertification, as the case may be.
2. Each Board Certified Appellate Practice Specialist shall present an application every five (5) years, on a form furnished by the Board, certifying that he or she has met the requirements of Section II.B above.

**Section III. STANDARDS FOR CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

A. Program Development and Presentation

1. The program should contribute to the professional competence of a Board Certified Appellate Practice Specialist and should be open for attendance by all such attorneys;
2. Programs should be developed by individual(s) qualified in the subject matter;
3. Program content should be current. Appellate Practice specialization CLE credit will be granted for an entire program if 70% or more of the program is devoted to appellate practice. If the program in its entirety does not meet the 70% requirement, individual sessions within the program will qualify for appellate practice specialization CLE credit if the session is directly related to the practice of appellate law. There shall be a presumption that a session is directly related to the practice of appellate law if 70% or more of the content of the session is devoted to appellate practice.
4. Participants should be informed in advance of objectives, prerequisites, experience level, content, advance preparation (if required), and teaching methods to be used;
5. Instructors or discussion leaders should be qualified with respect to program content and teaching method used;
6. Program sponsors should encourage participation only by individuals with appropriate education and/or experience;
7. The program sponsor must maintain registration and/or attendance records and such other records as may be necessary to substantiate compliance of the program with the above criteria.

B. Program Qualification

1. General Rule

Continuing legal education (“CLE”) programs must be approved by the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Committee (“MCLE Committee”) before approval can be granted by the Advisory Commission. Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (“MCLE”) is administered by the Louisiana State Bar Association (hereinafter the “LSBA”). The overriding consideration in determining if a specific program qualifies as acceptable continuing legal education is that it be a formal program of learning which contributes directly to the professional competence of an attorney who specializes in the field of Appellate Practice.

2. Program Approval

Programs shall be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Advisory Commission provided the program meets the general standards set forth in Section III, A and B1.

No credit shall be awarded for firm meetings or “in house” CLE programs.

**Section IV. OTHER METHODS OF EARNING SPECIALIZATION CLE CREDIT**

A. General Rules

1. Any other method of earning specialization CLE credit must be approved by MCLE before approval can be granted by the Advisory Commission, who shall then consider each request on a case-by-case basis.
2. All credit earned shall be calculated by MCLE in accordance with the Supreme Court of Louisiana Rules for Continuing Legal Education.
3. All requests for CLE credit shall be submitted to MCLE and the Advisory Commission within a reasonable period of time but no later than January 31 of the calendar year following the activity for which CLE credit is being sought.

B. Teaching

1. CLE credit may be awarded for teaching an approved CLE program pertinent to the specialization subject matter. If an individual teaches at a program and attends the balance of the program, then he or she shall receive credit for that portion of the program he or she did not teach in accordance with the Supreme Court of Louisiana Rules for Continuing Legal Education. No credit will be given for repetitious presentations of a program.
2. Teaching of academic courses in appellate practice in a law school or other graduate level program presented by a recognized professional educational association may earn CLE credit.
3. CLE credit may be awarded for teaching an appellate practice course at any seminar, provided the presentation meets all criteria contained in Section III, A and B, other than Section III.A 3.

C. Writing

CLE credit may be awarded for writing articles and other publications directed primarily to attorneys specializing in the field of appellate practice and published in professional periodicals and publications. Credit will not be awarded for authorship of articles and other publications until the writing has been published.

D. Louisiana State Law Institute Committee meetings

CLE credit may be awarded for attendance at Louisiana State Law Institute Committee meetings pertinent to the field of appellate practice.

E. Pro Bono

CLE credit may be awarded for providing uncompensated pro bono legal representation related to an appellate law matter, as defined in Section I C herein, to an indigent or near-indigent client or clients. CLE credit shall not be granted until the representation has been assigned, completed and verified by the assigning organization as defined by and in accordance with the Supreme Court of Louisiana Rules for Continuing Legal Education.

**Section V. CREDIT HOURS GRANTED**

- A. Only credit hours or the equivalent (and not hours dedicated to preparation) will be counted.
- B. One (1) hour of continuing legal education credit will be awarded for each 60 minutes of instruction. Where the program is several periods of instruction with intervening breaks, the number of minutes of instruction is summed for the entire program for which the credit is claimed and then the total number of minutes is divided by 60.
- C. A participant who is not present for an entire program may claim credit only for the portion he or she attended.
- D. The credit hours assigned to a program by MCLE will be accepted by the Advisory Commission unless the hours are clearly inaccurate under the standards for computing credit in accordance with the Supreme Court of Louisiana Rules for Continuing Legal Education.

**Section VI. COMPLIANCE**

A. General Rule

Specialization CLE credit hours will be computed on a calendar year basis and all attendance information for CLE credits earned shall be delivered to MCLE by January 31 of the following year.

B. Notification

The Board will notify each non-compliant Board Certified Appellate Practice Specialist of the credit hours he or she has earned during the preceding calendar year. The specialist shall have 30 days from the date of notification to appeal the award of credit hours.

A specialization transcript may be obtained from the Board website located at:  
<https://www.lsba.org/Specialization/SpecializationTranscriptsV5.aspx>

**Section VII. ADMINISTRATION**

The Advisory Commission may delegate its responsibility to rule on all matters pertaining to appellate practice CLE requirements to a committee consisting of at least three (3) Advisory Commission members. Any such committee shall report to the Advisory Commission, and the Advisory Commission shall, at all times, retain the right to review, modify, or supersede the decisions of any such committee.